



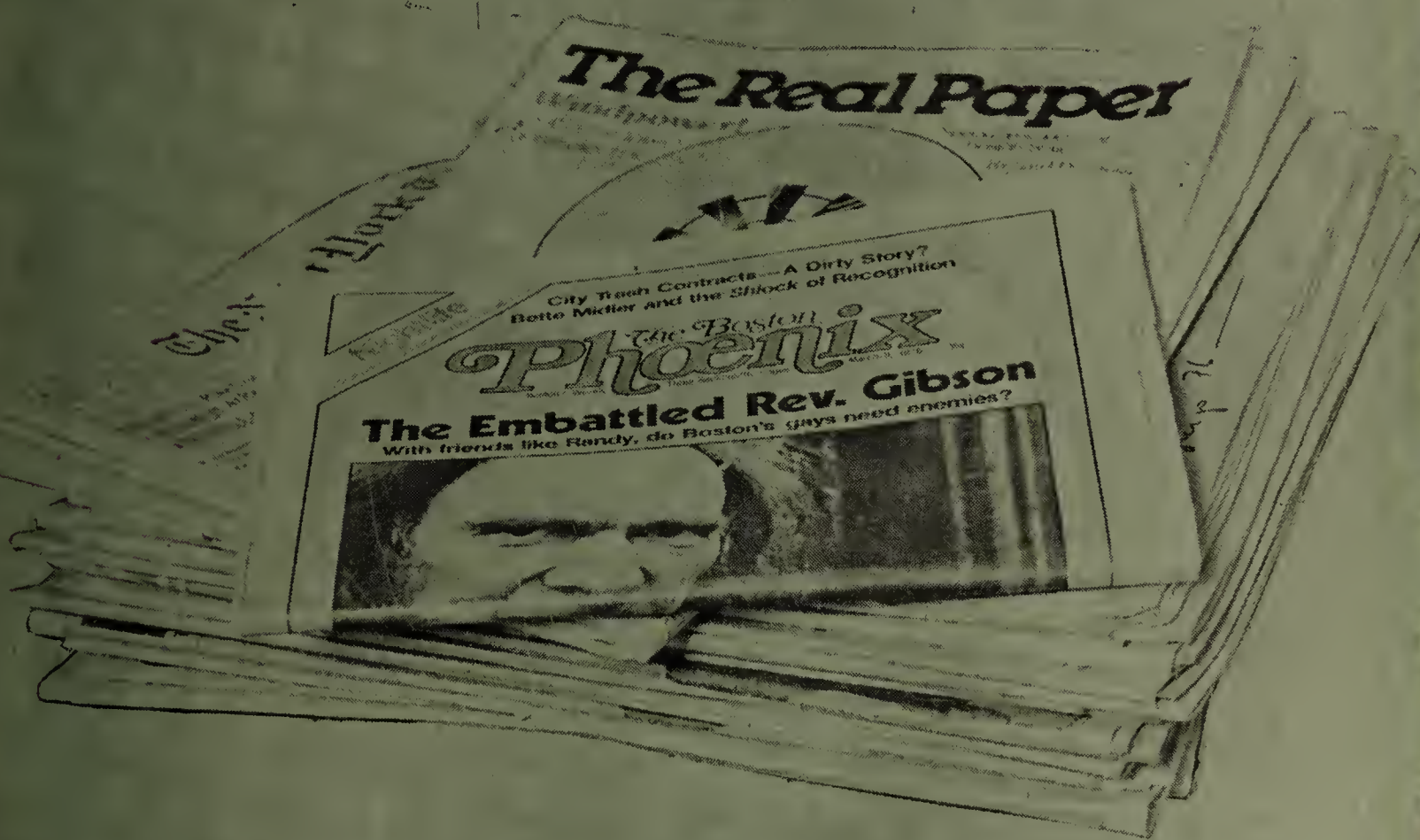
# the gay weekly

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Vol. 3, No. 38

March 20, 1976

Love Letters From the Straight Press, p. 10



## Risher and the Lesbian Mother Controversy





# gay community news

Vol. 3, No. 38

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March 20, 1976

## 'Anti-Protest' Protest Takes Toll on 'Snuff'

By Neil Miller

BOSTON — An unusual "anti-protest" protest appears to be making a significant dent in attendance and profits of the controversial film, "Snuff," recently booked into Boston's Combat Zone Gary Theatre. The film, which graphically shows the murder and dismemberment of a woman, has been called "a clear and present danger to women's lives," according to its detractors who mounted demonstrations both in Philadelphia and New York. Publicity for the film has implied that an actual murder was committed in the making of the film and the newspaper advertisements which state, "This film could only be made in South America where life is CHEAP," have tended to influence

rumors about the film. However, last week, New York City District Attorney Robert Morgenthau announced that an investigation by his office had found "that these rumors [that an actress had been murdered during the shooting of the film] are completely false and without basis."

In Boston, a wide coalition of groups, headed by Ellen B. Davis, former head of Gay Media Action and presently producer of gay public affairs programs, has made a supreme effort to stifle demonstrations against "Snuff." "We realized that any picketing, demonstrating, visible protest would only feed into the publicity for 'Snuff' and increase attendance," Davis said. "That was exactly what the distributor [Allan Shackleton] wanted

and he even admitted it by saying, 'Pickets sell tickets.' So we decided that the quickest way to get this movie out of town was to make sure as little attention as possible was drawn to it."

According to Davis, the coalition, including the National Organization of Women (NOW), the Women's Center, *Sister Courage*, 'Second Wave Magazine,' the Gay Men's Center, the American Friends Service Committee and a host of others, spent the entire weekend on the watch for demonstrations. "We stopped three demonstrations before they began," Davis revealed.

However, one demonstration, organized by the Committee Against Racism (CAR) and the Progressive Labor Party (PLP), two groups who

were active in anti-busing confrontations last fall, took place without the Coalition's knowledge. The CAR-PLP demonstration, which happened in front of the Gary Theatre on Sunday night, resulted in three people injured and an article in the following day's *Globe*. Both organizations objected to the "overt racism" of the "life is cheap in South America" advertising campaign. However, after being contacted by the Coalition, both CAR and the PLP agreed to halt future actions against "Snuff" and CAR is now a supporter of the Coalition's anti-protest approach.

So far it appears that the decision to avoid giving publicity to "Snuff" has been successful. Coalition "watch-

(Continued on page 6)

## Lansdowne Street's 4AM Closing Revoked

By Dean McLaughlin

BOSTON — The Boston Licensing Board has revoked the 2-4 a.m. extension of Boston gay disco 15 Lansdowne St.'s hours of operation. "An extension of hours was provisionally provided the owners to serve food between 2-4 a.m., pending review of the situation," affirmed Charles Byrne, chairman of the BLB. "After receiving numerous complaints from police and residents the extension was revoked," Byrne said. Closing hours for bars in Massachusetts are 2 a.m., and the extension of the 15 Lansdowne license was believed to be the first time any Boston bar was granted such an extension.

Greg Ryan, Lansdowne's manager, was "glad they did it. It means we'll have less bums down here trying to get in free. The number of people who actually stayed until four was very small."

Virginia Hurley, of the Fenway Community Center, complained, "It was a cute little thing that happened. The Board did not inform the neighborhood prior to its original approval of the extended hours." She cited a multitude of diverse complaints from local residents, chiefly in regard to the parking and noise problems created by the late closing. According to Hurley, residents also complained that Lansdowne's private security force were using attack dogs to clear the streets outside the club.

When asked about specific incidents that might have influenced the licensing board's decision, Deputy Superintendent Rachalski of Boston Police District Four, Back Bay, Allston and Brighton, cited an incident that occurred on Feb. 22 at 10:30 p.m. At that time a male standing outside the bar was bitten in the groin by a Great Dane held on a leash by a member of the bar's security force, Interstate. Dep. Supt. Rachalski also mentioned several assaults which had occurred outside the club in recent weeks, as well as several bomb threats investigated by the police. At 10:20 p.m. on Feb. 24, the night before the BLB's action, Rachalski stated, a man had mace sprayed in his face by a member of the security force on duty outside the bar.

Greg Ryan, asked to comment on the reports initially, replied, "We have a contract for security service which includes an attack dog, but we've never

had an occasion to use it, inside or out." After the above incident had been brought to his attention, he admitted the one occasion, commenting, "When we have people committing felonies outside our doors, some steps have to be taken."

Hurley stated that the community's main objections to the bar stem from the numerous complaints the center has received about Lansdowne's management's alleged policy of discrimina-

tion towards blacks and women. "As far as the community is concerned we do not want that sort of thing going on. The fact that the bar is gay is the least of our concerns. The fact that it discriminates against anyone, whether blacks, women, anyone, is objectionable to us."

Ryan denies totally the charges of discrimination. As to noise and parking problems disturbing residents, he pointed out that there are no residences

within two blocks of the club.

Hurley feels the bar has been completely unresponsive to the neighborhood. "We complained repeatedly in telephone calls about the situation and have never received so much as a return phone call." Ryan denied that anyone has ever attempted to contact him with complaints from residents. When asked specifically about the community center, he professed ignorance of its very existence.

## Brooklyn Bishop Backs Gay Priests, Teachers

BROOKLYN, N.Y. — In an elaboration of his recent statement supporting the "legitimate rights" of gay people, Bishop Francis J. Mugavero of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn, has stated that homosexuals have the right to be priests and teachers. However, Bishop Mugavero indicated that gay people holding such positions have no right "to display their homosexuality" or proclaim it as a "normal

way of life."

Last week the bishop issued a pastoral letter, the equivalent of a papal encyclical and issued only on rare occasions, stating that "our community must explore ways to secure the legitimate rights of all our citizens, regardless of sexual orientation, while being sensitive to the understanding and hopes of all involved."

The bishop, according to an article

in *The New York Times*, stated that while a homosexual act should be regarded as sinful on an objective basis, he would not "impute guilt" to a person who engages in such acts. "My role," said the bishop, "is to help the person relieve his guilt feelings, and to help him recognize his drives. I'm not going to condemn him or try to make him change. That decision has to be his."

The bishop's statement was, in his own words, "an attempt to bring the situation [the Vatican's Jan. 15 statement on sexuality] down to our area." He called the Vatican document "excellent" but nevertheless found its tone "like the last six Commandments with lots of 'thou shalt nots'."

Homosexuals, the bishop told *The Times*, "are people and they belong to us. We have to reach out and give support to them so they can move in the right direction."

As to gay teachers, the bishop said specifically, "There are homosexuals in every school system. It depends on what they do. If they say they are homosexual and that it is a valid way of life I wouldn't want them in the school system . . . everyone has a right to employment but not to display."

"In the same way, I wouldn't want a teacher saying it was perfectly all right to go out at age 16 and fornicate," said the bishop.

Bishop Mugavero, however, discounted the importance of legal protection of gay rights. He told *The Times* that he considered present legal protection of gays to be sufficient and that he was not "overly concerned" with the recent passage of Intro 554 in the New York City Council.



Mary Jo Risher (right), lesbian mother, and her lover Anne Foreman (left). In the center is Brenda Branch. For the story see page 3.

Photo by Charlotte Taft





## news notes

### MCC BREAK-IN

BOSTON — Unknown burglars broke into the Old West Church and the offices of Boston's Metropolitan Community Church last Tuesday night. An electric typewriter and a telephone answering service were stolen from the MCC office and the office was generally ransacked. MCC estimates the loss is approximately \$300. Sacramental items, valued at about \$1000, were removed from the Old West Church. The two churches share space at the Methodist Church's building on Cambridge Street in Boston.

The MCC immediately appealed for people to help finance replacement of the typewriter. "We're in desperate need of a typewriter," Bob Johnene of the church told GCN. "It was our only one and it's very difficult to function at this point."

### SEXUAL ETHICS

NEW YORK — As part of its spring education program, DIGNITY/New York will sponsor a Lenten series of four lectures on Sexual Ethics, with reference to the recent Vatican "Declaration on Certain Questions concerning Sexual Ethics."

The series opened March 9 with Father Robert Carter S.J. speaking on "The Text of the Declaration"; on March 15, Father John McNeil S.J. will speak on "Ethical Implications of the Declaration"; March 22, Father Robert Springer S.J. will give "The Historical Background of the Declaration." The series will close March 31 with a panel discussion of laypeople headed by Paris Baldacci of the Salvatoran Task Force.

The Lenten Lecture Series will be held at Union Theological Seminary, 120th Street and Broadway, each session beginning at 8 p.m. closing with questions and discussion periods.

A donation of \$3 per session is requested to help defray expenses.



Tympanum of the south portal of the Abbey Church of St. Denis, France.

### FENWAY VOTES

BOSTON — Two openly gay men are running as candidates for the Fenway Project Area Committee (FENPAC). The committee is an elected neighborhood committee that is mandated by the federal Housing and Urban Development Department (HUD) to represent residents of an urban renewal project area. The two men, Tom Nylund and David Scondras, are running on a "neighborhood slate" that is committed to keeping the Fenway area as "a human scale neighborhood and not kick out people who live in the neighborhood to serve the interests of redevelopers." FENPAC is mandated to give neighborhood input to all decisions concerning the neighborhood and has access to all Boston Redevelopment Authority information.

### LEATHER MEET

BOSTON — A three-day convention or "run" sponsored jointly by Entre Nous and The Vikings, Boston's two leather clubs, was held here last week, as more than 300 club members from all over the United States met for a weekend of fun and fraternity. Herbie's Ramrod Room was the site of a dinner and "one of the biggest crowds in years," according to one observer.

### PERRY PREACHES



PROVIDENCE — Metropolitan Community Church of Greater Providence will have as special guest preacher, Sunday, March 28, the Rev. Troy D. Perry, founder of the now-international Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches. Services will be held at 7 p.m. in the meeting-house at the corner of Benefit and Benevolence Streets on the East Side of Providence.

### HARRIS DELEGATE

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — Earl W. Colvin, activities coordinator of the Gay Citizens Alliance of Syracuse, is running in the April 6 New York Democratic primary on a delegate slate pledged to former Oklahoma Senator Fred Harris. Colvin is running as an alternate delegate in the 33rd Congressional District; whether he will actually go to New York depends upon the showing which Harris makes in his district.

In announcing support of Harris, Colvin noted that "Fred Harris has the best over-all platform the the strongest Gay rights stand of any of the major candidates and I feel he has earned the support of the Gay community." Marshall Blake, Harris' campaign coordinator for the Syracuse area, added that "In seeking the support of the Gay community of Syracuse, Fred Harris is showing the consistency on civil liberties questions which has marked his entire career."

However, a recent Harris decision, following his disappointing showings in the New Hampshire and Massachusetts presidential primaries, to "downgrade" his New York campaign, casts doubts on Colvin's possibilities to go to New York. The Populist Senator has decided not to "make major efforts" in the Illinois, New York, and Wisconsin primaries, and to put his emphasis on the April 27 Pennsylvania election.

Sen. Henry Jackson of Washington and Congressperson Morris Udall of Arizona are considered the main contenders in the New York balloting at this time.

### SPIRITUALITY

BOSTON — "Through the Looking Glass: A Gynergenic Experience," a conference on women's spirituality, will take place the weekend of April 23-25 at 100 Arlington St. in Boston.

The conference plans between 15 and 20 workshops ranging from the "Herstory of Goddess Worship" to "Feminism and Vegetarianism" to "Lesbianism and Witchcraft." A workshop called "Mental Institutions: The Continued Torture of Deviant Women" will also be offered.

Mary Daly, author of "Beyond God the Father," will offer a workshop on "The Breakthrough from Phallorcracy to Feminist Time-Space," while musical entertainer Kay Gardner will lead a workshop on "Our Steps Are Light: Musical Reflections."

Free childcare and registration will be offered to those who register by April 1. Checks or money orders of \$5 to attend the conference should be sent to Pomegranite Productions, P.O. Box 7326, Watertown, Ma. 02172.

### SHAPP ORDER UPHELD

HARRISBURG, Pa. — A suit seeking to nullify the Executive Order of Gov. Milton Shapp of Pennsylvania, which bars state agencies from discriminating against gays in employment, was rejected by the Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court recently. The court was unanimous in rejecting the suit, filed by a Pittsburgh businessperson, on the grounds that the Executive Order simply announces a policy of the governor's administration.

According to the *Philadelphia Gay News*, several of the justices in their opinions "seemed to indicate sympathy with the plaintiff's anti-gay stance." One justice, Judge Roy Wilkinson, Jr., drew a distinction between "affectional or sexual preference" and "deviate sexual intercourse." He noted that "if the affectional or sexual preference leads one into deviate intercourse in violation of the criminal laws of this commonwealth, then the individuals continue to be subject to the penalties of the law..." However, the judge stated that Shapp's order was "merely a statement of policy."

The lawyer for the plaintiff, Richard Robinson, stated that Robinson might appeal to a higher court. "Shapp is trying to foist his views upon the people and his views are inconsistent with our beliefs and traditions," the lawyer, Michael Hahalyak, said.



Guereza (*Colobus guereza*).

### PRISON CENSOR

BOSTON — The "Gay Person's Guide to New England," which gives a complete listing of gay organizations, meeting-places, businesses and the like throughout New England, recently received the following letter from the warden of the U.S. Penitentiary at Atlanta, Ga. The letter reads as follows:

Dear Sir:

The enclosed publication "A Gay Person's Guide to New England" is returned as unacceptable material for inmates of this institution. The publication was addressed to Mr. Russell Spear, Register Number 00752-158.

We have determined that the above publication pertains to the "Gay Community" and would not be in the best interest of the discipline and good order of the institution.

If you desire to appeal our decision you may write to the Director, Southeast Regional Office, U.S. Bureau of Prisons, 3500 Greenbriar Parkway, Atlanta, Ga. 30331.

Sincerely, M. R. Hogan, Warden.

Enclosure: Book "A Gay Person's Guide to New England."



## contact

By Tom Caruso

HARTFORD — MCC/Hartford has announced plans for a Saturday, March 27 conference focusing on "Roles and Relationships." The all day session, scheduled for MCC/Center, 11 Amity St., Hartford, will feature Rev. Edward Hougen and Rev. Margaret Hougen of Boston as resource persons. Rev. Kenneth Bieber, of Woodmont (Conn.) United Church of Christ, is also scheduled to appear.

Focusing on traditional and alternative human relationships, and the role of feminism in today's world, the conference workshops will examine marriage as a role model, gay morality, multiple relationships, and feminism and gay activism. Films, panels, and rap groups are tentatively set for both the morning and afternoon sessions.

The conference will conclude with a dinner/theatre production of the original version of the gay, romantic comedy "The Voice of the Turtle." Information about the day's events can be obtained by calling MCC/Hartford at (203) 522-5575 or 232-5110.

+ + +

HARTFORD — Connecticut's "Sexual Orientation Committee" is re-organizing in preparation for another gay rights bill next year following the defeat of this year's "Sexual Orientation Bill" in the State House March 3.

Input from Fairfield and Litchfield counties is desperately needed, since representatives from these two conservative areas have consistently voted against gay civil rights. The meeting is scheduled for Sunday, March 21 at 2:30 p.m. at Hartford/MCC Center, 11 Amity St., Hartford. The committee's current phone number is (203) 247-1771.



# Lesbian Mother Continues Custody Struggle

By Lisa I. Schwartz

DALLAS, Texas — The rights of lesbian mothers suffered another defeat in Dallas recently as Mary Jo Risher lost custody of her youngest son to her ex-husband. In the first "lesbian mother" case to receive national attention, Risher was denied custody solely on the grounds of her homosexuality. A jury of 10 men and two women decided by a vote of 10-2 that Richard Risher, 9, must leave the home of his mother and her lover to live with his father.

"My husband raised the issue in court even though we tried in pre-trial hearings to keep it out," Mary Jo Risher explained. According to court testimony, her ex-husband "was shocked" to learn that his wife was gay and insisted that living in a lesbian household would be detrimental to the child's growth.

"I think that it's important for children to have the mother and father image in their lives, and certainly two women showing affection to each other is not my idea of a good environment for a child," Douglas Risher, Jr., the ex-husband, said.

In an interview with GCN, Mary Jo Risher said, "They made a lot of remarks in court about the role situation in the child's life, saying that there had to be a male role. Ann [her lover] was attacked for working 16 hours a day for a couple of months to pay for the court costs, whereas a man would be praised for the same thing.

"This ideology," she said, "puts a lot of women in danger of losing their children, whether living as Ann and I do, or simply women sharing expenses. If their ex-husbands wanted to make trouble, he could simply complain about the role situation. Ann's husband has a 24 hour wife, but Ann and I

have to work. This means that only women who do not work and have the time to be in a 'wife role' will be entitled to children."

The case gained national press coverage when the National Organization for Women (NOW) issued a statement of support. Stating that Risher's rights were denied by the court decision to consider her lesbianism to be a relevant issue in deciding custody, NOW said "We declare that the abridgement of the basic rights of Ms. Risher and every other lesbian mother fighting such a judgment diminishes the freedom of all women; moreover it constitutes a flagrant denial of equal justice under law."

Risher plans an appeal of the decision, which is expected to have costs exceeding \$26,000. In order to raise money for the appeal, Risher went to NOW's Legal and Education Fund for help. Despite the statement of support and a NOW decision to allocate 1% of

the budget for lesbian rights, Risher received only \$500. According to reliable sources within the higher echelons of NOW, considerable disappointment was expressed by NOW executives. A motion will be presented to the NOW board to increase the funds.

Risher and her lover, Ann Foreman, lived in a Dallas suburb with the children from their former marriages. Julie Ann Foreman, 11, and Richard and Jimmy Risher, 9 and 17.

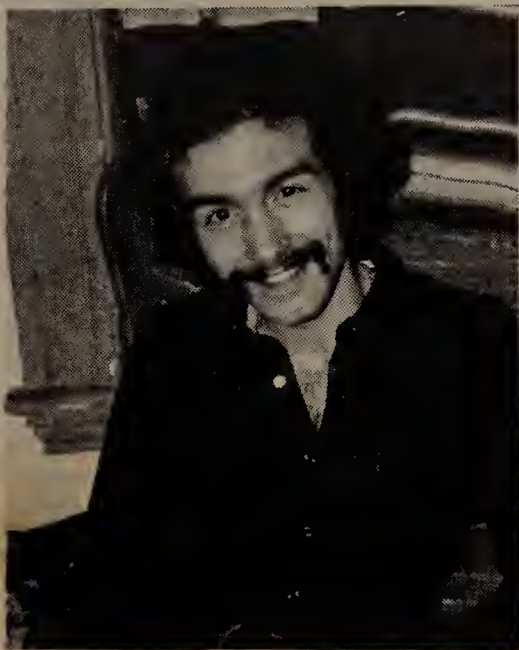
Risher, who works as a hospital administrator, has only recently joined NOW and is a volunteer at various charitable organizations. Until their lifestyle became a public issue, Risher and Foreman said they never tried to hide their gayness but, "If the question was not raised, no answer was given."

"We hope that this case will help other women and give them courage. We intend to keep fighting."

## Abreu Moves to Revitalize Gay Media Action

BOSTON — Gay Media Action (GMA), a Boston organization dedicated to the honest and realistic portrayal of gay people in the media, is undergoing reorganization with Joe Abreu becoming the group's new chairperson. Abreu, who has been with GMA for the last nine months, replaces Ellen Davis. Davis will now concentrate on the production of two GMA sponsored radio shows — "Closet Space" on WCAS-AM and "Gay Perspective on Telegraph Beacon Star" on WTBS-FM — while Abreu will put his energy into community services.

Decrying the "apathy" which he feels is GMA's main problem, Abreu has a number of ambitious plans to maximize the influence of gay people with the local media. "I'm planning a write-in campaign with WBZ-TV to make them aware that there really are gay people out there. The television stations feel that there are only ten people who really care what they show.



Joe Abreu

Photo by Judy McDonald

I'm going to put out a leaflet for people to send WBZ during an en masse 'write-in' and 'call-in' the week

of April 12-16. They've got to be made aware that people are concerned."

Abreu also plans to get a list of people who will function as a "zap list" to be notified immediately and to call-in immediately to the media whenever there is a "media alert." There have been six media alerts in the last month, Abreu emphasized. Abreu also plans to do some fund-raising as well.

Ellen Davis, outgoing chairperson of GMA, praised Abreu for his "high energy and good ideas." "Gay Media Action has always been so diversified that it's been impossible for one person to do it. I want to get into areas that I'm interested in. The community is forever changing and it's important to get new people involved. Too many veterans hold on for too long in the gay movement, too many people do the same things for years.

"I hope the community supports Joe. He's really a high energy person and I'm sure he'll do an excellent job. I just wish the community would realize

how important the effect of the media on our lives really is," Davis told GCN.

Davis also expressed regret that many gay organizations are fast becoming "institutionalized." "We're trying to avoid that in GMA. Turnovers are needed, new people, and new life are needed."

Davis concurred with Abreu's view that apathy is the biggest danger to gay influence in the media. "After Elaine Noble got elected, many gay people felt that the revolution was over and that we won or at least tied," said Davis.

"But that's just not true," she said. "The 'Dog Day Afternoon' thing was devastating proof of that. The theatre was packed with gay people. Respected members of the community came out of the theatre saying 'that's not a bad movie.' It was incredible. We have so far to go."

Anyone interested in involving themselves with Gay Media Action should call Joe Abreu at 354-2079.

## Police Ask Investigation of ABCC's Zangrilli

BOSTON — The Massachusetts Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission (ABCC), which has been at the center of the Jacques and The Other Side controversy, came under strong attack from two sides last week.

At a meeting of the ABCC held on Wednesday, Michael DeMarco, lawyer for the Boston Police Department, called for an investigation by the Attorney General of "alleged corruption" on the part of one of the ABCC's three commissioners, A. Ernest Zangrilli. DeMarco, testifying at a hearing in which the two Bay Village bars were appealing the 12 a.m. closing time ordered by the Boston Licensing Board and now in effect, charged that a telephone call had swayed Zangrilli's vote in agreeing to the hearing. Zangrilli, according to the police department lawyer, had originally voted against hearing the Jacques and The Other Side appeal but changed his mind after a phone call was made to him at home.

The *Boston Globe* quoted Zangrilli as calling the phone call "short and to the point." "He [the bars attorney] wanted to know if he could have a five minute hearing," Zangrilli was reported to have said. "I told him I would not deny any citizen a hearing."

Despite the accusations, Zangrilli refused to disqualify himself from the

case. Individual ABCC commissioners have the right to decide on whether to disqualify themselves or not.

After Zangrilli refused to disqualify himself, DeMarco asked that the entire ABCC disqualify itself from handling the appeal. Commission chairman Edward F. Harrington decided to delay further hearing until deciding on Friday on DeMarco's disqualification motion. As this took place after GCN went to press, the result is not known at this time.

"If they [the ABCC] decide to dismiss the appeal," DeMarco told GCN in a telephone interview, "that acknowledges that there was a 'defect' caused by Zangrilli's action. If they don't dismiss the case," he said, "they ratify it [Zangrilli's alleged action]."

DeMarco told GCN that "I will turn over what I've gathered, to the extent that it covers alleged corruption, to the Attorney General's office. It's not our responsibility to investigate; it's the Attorney General's responsibility."

Meanwhile, testifying before the legislature's Government Regulations Committee at the State House on Wednesday, Governor Michael Dukakis personally called for the ABCC's abolition. The governor read a two-page statement to the committee in which he characterized the ABCC as "a relic of Prohibition that should be discarded." The governor's proposal

included a plan to transfer appeals from local licensing boards, presently

handled by the ABCC, to the Massachusetts Superior Courts.

## Gay Radio Show Wins UPI Award

BOSTON — United Press International (UPI), the largest news wire service in the world, has given a third place award for "Community Service" to Boston's WBCN-FM for its radio show, "What Ever Happened to Gay Legislation?" The designation was made as part of the UPI's annual Tom Phillips Awards and is believed to be the first time that a gay radio show was so honored.

The show, which was aired the Sunday before Gay Pride Week in June of 1975, was produced by WBCN News Director John Scagliotti, WBCN Women's News Director Susan Sprecher and GCN News Editor Neil Miller. The show, which lasted a half hour, featured interviews with Reps. Elaine Noble and Barney Frank, Connecticut Gay Lobbyist Chris Pattee, and anti-gay Massachusetts Rep. William Hogan. GCN political columnist David Brill, *Fag Rag* collective member Charlie Shively, and *Real Paper* columnist Andrew Kopkind also participated in the program.

John Scagliotti, WBCN news and public affairs director, was extremely pleased with the award. "I've been

entering gay shows in every contest there is for the last few years. The award in this case really shows that gay concerns are becoming a legitimate thing with the national media." Scagliotti was one of the founders of WBCN's *Lavender Hour*, one of the first gay radio shows in the country.

The judges, members of the Radio-Television Department at the Syracuse University School of Communications, commented that the WBCN entry was "a well produced program effectively combining elements of multiple-voice, music, narration, and interviews . . . outstanding!"

### NOTICE

Massachusetts Gay Legislation '76 has learned that House bill 2541, the gay rights bill prohibiting discrimination against gays by the Massachusetts Civil Service system, is scheduled for a vote next Monday in the State Senate. The bill was given an almost-unanimously favorable report by the Committee on Public Service. GL '76 has asked all Massachusetts gays to contact their Senators in support of H.2541.





Gay Community News (G.C.N.) is dedicated to providing coverage of events and news of interest to the gay community, as well as stimulation of event-oriented opinion within the community.

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## LETTERS

*Letters to the Editor should be 200 words or less. All letters submitted for publication must be signed; names will be withheld upon request. GCN retains the right to edit all letters.*

### gay culture

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

I read, with interest, John Kyper's account of a New York Gay Activists Alliance forum "Is There A Gay Culture?" (GCN, Feb. 21). I must say that I regret that I couldn't be there for this valuable discussion.

Apparently, two different types of "gay culture" were discussed but were not clarified. When we speak of gay culture we could be referring to 'culture' in the anthropological sense, as in the ethnographic study of the homosexual community in contemporary urban areas. Such a study could include considering the nature of gay ghettos such as Greenwich Village with its gay bars, restaurants, baths, discos, etc., or the more clandestine gay grapevine that exists in Moscow — with all its secrecy and discretion. In either case, the study of homosexual communities in different societies is a very worthwhile one.

Most gay people, I would think, regard "gay culture" in the historical and cultural sense. In other words, our "gay heritage" — the homosexual experience which is manifested in poetry, literature, art, scientific research, etc. The value of learning from our gay heritage should not be minimized! We gay people have been denied our history which is rich and heroic. Unfortunately, much of this "gay culture" has been destroyed or suppressed as in the case of Sappho's poetry. There seems to be a resurgence of interest in the gay heritage, however. Many gay people are rediscovering their history.

My own coming out experience was particularly rewarding because I was fascinated by my gayness. By the time I was 16 I was reading Whitman, Gide, Proust, Verlaine, Carpenter, Hirschfeld, and all the rest. I was also interested in lesbian culture and exposed myself to Radcliffe Hall, willa Cather, Gertrude Stein, among others. When I discovered my gayness, I devoured every book — fiction or non-fiction — on the subject that I could find. This included the biographies of great gay men and women, gay poetry, gay fiction, psychological research, historical accounts — all related to homosexuality.

Exposing ourselves to gay culture is exciting and meaningful. As for myself, it helped mold my identity and self-esteem as a gay person. I recommend to all gay men and lesbians that studying and learning of our gay heritage is valuable and of great merit.

In Gay Love & Liberation,  
Mark N. Silber

### too many hands

To The Editor:

In David Brill's excellent, highly informative wrap-up on "The Democratic Candidates" (all of who sincerely, and with a deep sense of commitment want our votes) a passing reference was made to New York City Councilwoman Aileen Ryan, which is not altogether accurate and which

many New Yorkers will wonder about.

The passage states that this Henry Jackson supporter "has single-handedly blocked" New York City's historic efforts to pass Gay civil rights legislation when the fact is that Aileen Ryan is no more capable than a marionette (which in itself says something about those who surround "Scoop The Poop" Jackson). Actually, if a puppeteer is to be singled-out the name Tom Cuite (Democratic City Council Majority Leader) will go down in infamy for his homophobic manipulation of the Council.

Further, it is abundantly apparent that these individuals who want our votes will speak in favor of our liberation only to the extent we force them to do so (with perhaps the exception of Governor Milton Shapp who has taken significant initiatives — but even he is seriously constrained by a political system which has a vested interest in the continued oppression of Gay peoples). It therefore seems imperative for Lesbians and Gay men to resolve now to participate in planned Gay demonstrations to be staged this summer against the Democratic (and Republican) National Convention(s).

In Gay Struggle, & With Gay Love,  
Morty Manford  
President, National Coalition  
of Gay Activists

[David Brill replies: Perhaps I should have said almost single-handedly. P.S. I'm against demonstrations.]



### heterophobic tendencies

Dear Gay Community News:

Thank you for the latest edition of GCN. As a former delegate-at-large and also having been through the mental health mill, I am typing some comments regarding that article, "You and Mental Health."

But first let me contribute a new word to the vocabulary: heterophobia. It is beginning to seem to me that the entire medical/psychiatric/legal worlds want to wreak their homophobia upon us.

Personally, I have come to this conclusion about gay sex: there's nothing wrong with it, there's nothing right with it. Yes?

In the fifth column of your type, as opposed to my type (this letter) — it says: What was heresy before was now psychiatric maladjustment. Might I rephrase it thus: What was heresy is now (psychiatric) medical malpractice.

Lest this be misunderstood, I am typing this as my personal opinion — it in no way reflects current thinking here at GAA-NYC.

Behavior mod and especially aversion therapy don't only sound like 1984 and Walden Two — they are it, at least their present state of sophistication of such things. No one has ever considered even that we may have an inborn need for at least experimentation with the same sex. Until they — the homophobes, the worst of which are the paranoid-type politicians who can

be identified by their refusal to even consider us as being included in the Constitution, at least consider this, we can assume them "disturbed."

Nowhere in my reading of that document do I find the words: except lesbians, homosexuals, gay men. Indeed, the ones who *must* challenge our sexuality — in whatever way — are defensive, and finally gave rise to the word heterophobia. To turn the tables and the discussion around for a change!

Needless to say, gays do suffer abuse. Media war on the (defensive) straights, I say! Remember the Stonewall! (NYC, 1968 or 1969 — I forget.)

Please respond in print or by mail. Happy newspapering!

Very truly yours,  
Julius Gebhardt

### rape is rape

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

I would like to comment on your article dealing with Miguel Pinero. Truly what he says about gays in prison is what is happening and I can even see his point when he defends his play "Short Eyes" but his remarks about rape in prison make me wonder if he hasn't played the role of "god" a little too long and it has affected his thinking (or at least his memory).

Sure . . . some young prisoners do lead other inmates on and sometimes "snitches" are raped (although I always suspected that the rapist used the "snitch" label as an excuse for his vile act). However . . . MOST young inmates get raped for the simple reason that they are young. It is extremely difficult for an inmate to "dress himself up pretty" inside a jail or prison. And if all inmates that "lathers himself (themselves) up nice" were rape victims many so called "he man" inmates would be walking around with very sore behinds!

As for using the word "love" — gay inmates receive hundreds of notes from "he man" inmates telling them how much they "love" them — when in truth they want to make it with them and love has nothing to do with it. Love affairs do happen behind prison walls but they are rare and the affair that lasts for many years is almost always between two inmates that were gay before going to prison and will remain so when released. Het inmates want SEX (thus rape) not LOVE! But, Miguel Pinero and I might not agree on what "love" is!!!

Rape is rape — and the person that commits the act is a rapist — not a frustrated lover!

In Gay Solidarity,  
Ron Endersby

### wright candidate

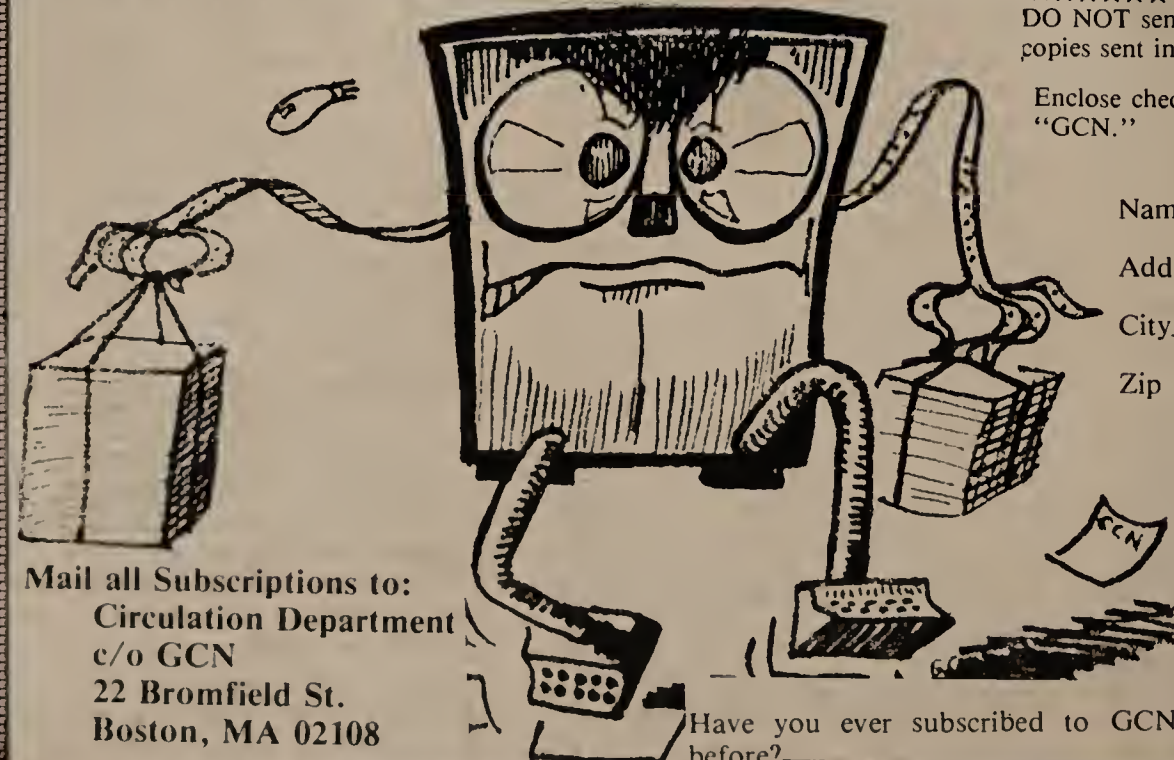
Dear Editor:

You failed to mention, in your article regarding the presidential candidates, the candidate for the People's Party. Already on the ballot in Vermont and California (and possibly others), Margaret Wright is the only presidential candidate who truly represents a Feminist view concerning gay rights.

I have enclosed some of her literature, and hope you would review this and pursue further information on her candidacy.

Sincerely,  
Joyce Bussler

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SNUFF: A GAY MALE VIEWPOINT

By Allen Young

On a recent trip to New York City, I decided to go to a pornographic movie theatre to fulfill some fantasies ("Reflections of Youth" was the main attraction), and hopefully to meet someone for a sexual encounter. I was fed up with all of the leathermen walking up and down Christopher Street, and my experiences with cruising in porno movies was favorable. I had, in the past, met several nice young men, new to the gay scene, who were turned off to the heavy leather imagery stalking the streets of Greenwich Village.

Before "Reflections of Youth" came on the screen, however, I was subjected to the previews of coming attractions. Much to my annoyance, it turned out that among the next features was a very heavy S&M movie. The preview was deeply disturbing. I

remember the narrator's voice, very vividly, as it intoned, ominously, over and over again, the question: "Did it really happen?"

The movie, if the preview is to be believed, focuses on a bizarre S&M torture sequence. The viewer is supposed to imagine (or be convinced) that this torture was really happening. I vividly remember the screams of the young man who was being raped and tortured — the screams sounded horribly real (and as anyone who is familiar with the genre can attest, good acting is virtually unknown in male porn).

Was this young man being tortured, without his consent? And if he was "consenting," what is the nature of that consent in our society? Is it perhaps akin to the wife whose husband beats her up regularly but who refuses to call the police, not only because she is afraid of her husband's brutality, but because she is convinced that there is no alternative for her to that marriage? Is the consenting homosexual masochist, at least in extreme situations like this, a victim of his own notions of his need to be submissive to a dominant (sadistic) male?

With the current controversy over the movie "Snuff," in which a woman is murdered in order to create a film of

erotic entertainment, I feel that the gay male community needs to ask itself some serious questions about the nature of sado-masochism in the gay male community. A male homosexual snuff movie may well be on its way!

The movie I referred to earlier is entitled "Born to Raise Hell," and it was the feature film at two Manhattan theaters in mid-February (perhaps it's still playing). The ads for the movie in the *Village Voice* state: "Brutal — heavy realistic S&M film." Some men (am I really supposed to call them "gay"?) pay five dollars to see this film; well it frightens me very much to think that there are people in the alleged "gay male community" for whom erotic entertainment consists of unabashed brutality.

Personally, I think brutality is disgusting, and I don't care whether its source is straight men or gay men. It has become commonplace for the gay male community to be rather accepting of S&M sexuality, and a number of writers (c.f., Peter Fisher's *The Gay Mystique*) emphasize its harmlessness and the consensual and theatrical nature of it. Well, I am not convinced. For many, I am sure, it's all consensual and theatrical, but what about those men who are victims of rape and murder? When a movie like "Born to Raise Hell" comes along, when "Snuff" is portraying the murderous erotic fantasies of straight men, I am convinced we have something to worry about.

Does anyone remember how *The Advocate* portrayed Dean Corll and the Houston murders? The writing and photos in those articles were designed to titillate, make no mistake about it.

Two movies advertised on the very

same page of the *Village Voice* are entitled "Magic Fists" and "Golden Fists." Why fist-fucking is erotic entertainment, and why it has become so common in male homosexuality, is beyond me. Can fist-fucking really be considered part of "making love"? It is an act obviously premised on fantasies of dominance and submission, and the person whose rectum is being penetrated is almost certainly subjecting his body to considerable damage — ask any doctor.

Are we, in the name of "liberation," supposed to remain neutral (i.e., accepting) of a relationship between two men in which one is locked in a cage and/or shackles much of the time?

The male homosexual world is rife with men who are affirming the essence of masculinity through sexual dominance trips. Most of these men, I suspect, think that the rest of us are just a bunch of sissies and faggots anyway. I believe that it is an urgent task of the gay liberation movement to understand and struggle against male dominance.



*Editor's Note: In an attempt to get our readership more involved with the paper, GCN is offering this space for opinions, views or feelings on gay issues. Articles submitted to us for this space should be addressed to Forum, c/o GCN. The articles should be 500 words or less and whenever possible they should be typewritten and double spaced. Although, GCN reserves the right to edit all copy we will honestly strive to edit for length not for content. This is your column, say what you want!*



NEED OF THE WEEK

MCC/Boston is in desperate need of an electric typewriter after last Tuesday's robbery. Anyone who can contribute one should get in touch with the Metropolitan Community Church office at 523-7664.

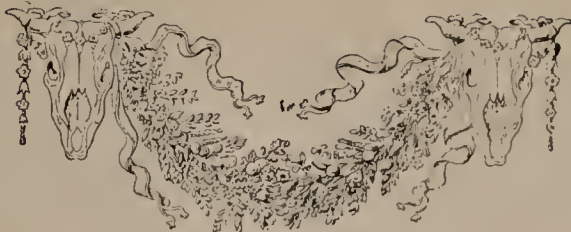
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# NEW YORK REVELATIONS

By Tony Russo

NEW YORK — With only a week having elapsed since the WNET "Outreach" three hour show on Gay services, the response has been overwhelming. Never has WNET received so many letters in response to an "Outreach" program. Typically, a show receives from 50 to 70 letters. WNET has received more than 500 letters in response to the Gay Services Program with only six of those letters being negative. The response has been so great that according to Gay Media Coalition (GMC) Coordinator **Leon Heath**, the show will be repeated in early April. "This is a first for the Movement," Heath said. "Never has there been a three hour show on live television dedicated to gay people and co-produced by gay people (GMC). We have a lot to be proud of."

Although still in shock from the response to the program, GMC had elections for a new co-coordinator. **Kitty Cotter**, media chairperson of Lesbian Feminist Liberation, was elected to fill the position vacated by **Taylor Ross** on Feb. 9. Both Kitty Cotter and Leon Heath were the co-

ordinators of the WNET program. According to Heath, "We work well together. I will be looking forward to working with her again."

Mattachine had an open house this week. The affair was to acquaint people with Mattachine, particularly those who had heard of the group on the "Outreach" program. At the same time, it was also aimed at helping to raise money for the group. Mattachine, New York's oldest gay group, is in serious financial difficulties. The

group has sent out emergency appeals to its members and friends. All donations should be sent to: Mattachine Society Inc., 59 Christopher St., New York City 10014.

The Men's Caucus of the Gay Academic Union (GAU) will hold its monthly meeting on Friday, March 19 at 7:30 p.m. at St. John's in the Village, West 11th St. and Waverly Place). Their discussion, on "Transsexualism," will be conducted by **Charles Ihlenfeld**. Dr. Ihlenfeld, a re-

nowned researcher and therapist in the field, has also appeared before the GAU at their national conference in November.

A four-alarm fire destroyed the Hudson River Pier in the Hudson River at Greenwich Village last week. The pier, which is often frequented by gay men for brief sexual encounters, has been set fire to many times by apparent homophobic persons in the past few years. This fire seemed the last. Fortunately, only one was injured.

## Hartford Council Names MCC Minister

HARTFORD — F. Jay Deacon, pastor of Hartford's Metropolitan Community Church, has been named to the administrative committee of the Social Service Department of the Capitol Region Council of Churches (CRCC). The department provides programs and a full-time staff to relate to problems of equal rights, housing

discrimination, drug addiction, poverty, aging, education, and other community concerns.

Deacon's appointment follows the drafting of a Statement on Basic Human Rights at the CRCC's Annual Assembly on Feb. 9, only hours after a public hearing at the Connecticut State Capitol on a proposed gay civil rights

bill. At the hearing, a representative of the CRCC Social Service Department testified in favor of the bill. However, the bill was defeated by the State Assembly by an 84-62 vote on March 3.

The CRCC Human Rights Statement, approved over attempts to delete "sexual preference" from it, states that "we are bound to all the people of the world by our common humanity as children of God . . . Therefore we will examine . . . laws . . . that focus on the needs of persons suffering discrimination because of race, color, creed, age, physical handicap, language, or affectional preference."

When Catholic delegates at the CRCC Assembly asked that "affectional preference" be deleted from the resolution, Rev. Deacon responded that "For too long the church has assumed the prerogative to ration the civil rights of people according to a theological bias of its own. Difference has been equated with heresy, and people of different affectional orientation have been burned as heretics. I hope we are past discussing whether persons who are different should possess equal rights in Connecticut."

Only three of more than 200 attending delegates voted to delete the affectional preference phrase from the resolution.

MCC has been a CRCC member since April 1974.

## Snuff Protests

(Continued from page 1)

dogs" report that no more than 15 to 20 people since opening day have been entering the Gary Theatre for any one performance and that many people have walked out. "I feel that this is one of the most creative, innovative protests that I've ever been involved in," Davis told GCN. "There has been an absolutely remarkable number of diversified people and groups involved. The telephone network has been incredible. The media has cooperated with us in a fantastic way that we never thought possible."

Davis was critical of a recent *Win Magazine* article that implied that "Snuff" was "forced out" of Philadelphia when women from Dyketactics destroyed the print of the film. Davis emphasized that the film was merely moved to another theatre.

Davis disagreed with the CAR-PLP belief that racism was the main issue in opposing "Snuff." "Our top priority as far as this movie goes is that this film is a danger to women's lives. It was a woman who is dismembered in the film. It's women's lives which are considered cheap. This movie is a real catharsis for the macho image. Racism is just not the main issue," Davis continued. "Racism is part of the publicity issue, that's all. The woman dismembered in the film was an American actress."

While Coalition members attempted

to "snuff out" demonstrations outside the theatre, phone lines at Sack Theatre were jammed with callers. One gay man, Scott Alpert, reported that after he had criticized the film to Sack Theatre publicity director Hope Rosen, Rosen asked him why he didn't go out and picket. When Alpert said "That would be playing into your hands, wouldn't it," Rosen was said to have replied, "Well, I am the publicity director, aren't I?"

Although Sack Theatre President Alan Freidberg was quoted by one Boston media person as saying that he wouldn't "go across the street to see 'Snuff'," Sack apparently has no intention of cancelling the film at this point. A recent phone call to the Gary Theatre asking about the duration of "Snuff's" stay in Boston elicited the response that the film had an "unlimited engagement."

Meanwhile in New York City, Manhattan Dist. Atty. Morgenthau refused to ban the film because his investigators had proven that the reported murder during the course of the film was "a hoax." "Our investigators have met the director of this scene and the actress who plays the role of the murdered woman and have ascertained that the so-called killing scene is nothing more than conventional trick photography, as is evident to anyone who sees the movie," Morgenthau stated.

Morgenthau stated that the climactic murder scene was "tacked onto the end" of the original last December — and that that scene was in fact shot in a West 29th Street studio in New York City.

The district attorney, quoted in the *New York Post*, stated that the actress who plays the dismembered woman is "alive and well and all her extremities are present."

Morgenthau did not, however, address the issue of the sensational advertising campaign which has been as much the target of the protesters' ire as the reality or unreality of the murder. At the same time, the Boston Police Department was studying the film to determine if there were any grounds on which to prosecute it or ban it in this city.



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# Ellen Grusse, Grand Jury Resister, Speaks Out

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By Nancy Wechsler

NEW HAVEN, Conn. — *Ellen Grusse was released from Niantic Women's Prison on Dec. 19, 1975 after spending seven months in jail because she had refused to testify before a federal grand jury looking into the whereabouts of Susan Saxe and Kathy Power. I interviewed her in February of 1976.*

**Nancy Wechsler: When did you first go to jail?**

Ellen Grusse: March 5th.

**Nancy: Where you in Niantic the whole time?**

Ellen: Yes. I was out for two months in between grand juries.

**Nancy: What was Niantic like?**

Ellen: Niantic is not at all like your typical prison, it's very liberal. It's out in the country, across from the sea, with 900 wooded acres and a lake. It doesn't have cells, it has several little cottages, which have between 15-30 women in each. Each woman has an individual small room. For the most part doors are not locked. Everyone has to work at some type of job, except the unsentenced women. Unsentenced women are in a higher security cottage which is locked at all times. They can never leave the floor without supervision. Technically Terri and I were unsentenced but we were placed with the sentenced women. So we had a lot more freedom than Jill [Raymond] or Susan [Saxe].

**Nancy: So you worked?**

Ellen: Yes. Women did the usual female traditional jobs. The jobs available were in kitchen, cleaning and housekeeping, cooking, business machines, keypunch, motor vehicles department. I worked as a tutor in the education program for high school equivalency. I also worked in the commissary. Women were paid between 50c-\$1.00 a day depending on how long you were in Niantic.

**Nancy: How did you get along with some of the other women?**

Ellen: I got along fine with everybody practically.

**Nancy: What were the kinds of things people were in jail for?**

Ellen: Most typically drugs . . . the off-the-street scene which includes drugs, prostitution, shoplifting, cashing checks, welfare 'fraud' — those kind of things. For very small amounts of money women are thrown in jail. Mostly the crimes were economic crimes — for economic survival. There were also women in jail for crimes of 'violence,' which really meant self-defense protecting oneself from physical abuse or rape.

**Nancy: Did you talk to the other women about why you were in jail?**

**What sort of reaction did you get?**

Ellen: Immediately supportive. The other inmates supported us 100%. They could really relate to what we were doing, and they were totally flipped out that we could get time without being sentenced and that we got a lot more time than many of them. The thing they could really relate to was that we didn't snitch on anybody.

**Nancy: What was the reaction to your being a lesbian?**

Ellen: Terri and I decided when we went to jail we would not be out. We decided not to say anything because we didn't know what to expect from the women or the institution. Well . . . when you first go into Niantic you are locked up for 24 hours. When I came out of the lockup there was a woman there who said, "Are you gay?" I said . . . well yah. And she said "Oh that's cool, no problem." From then on it was o.k. and as a matter of fact we got

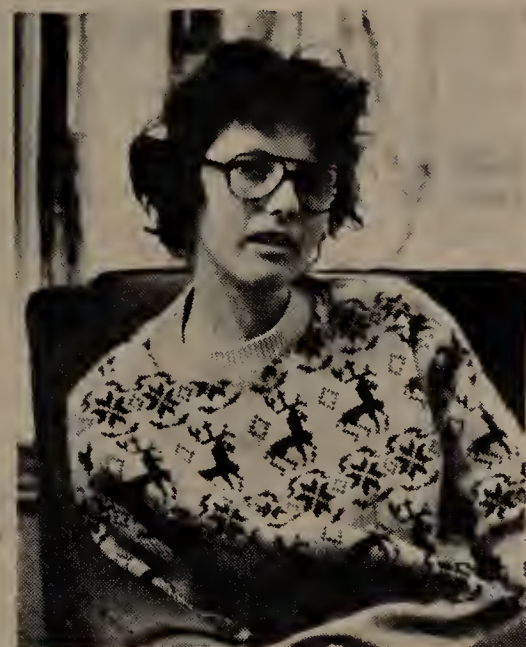
a lot of questions about being gay from people wanting to understand what our relationship was — people still seeing us as a couple. Which one is butch, which one is femme, stuff like that. So we would talk about where we were coming from.

**Nancy: Did you meet other lesbians in jail?**

Ellen: Oh yeh. For the most part they were into heavy roles . . . I couldn't relate to that at all. There were a few lesbians I could relate to.

**Nancy: How did the matrons deal with lesbianism?**

Ellen: There are very strict rules against lesbianism but they are enforced arbitrarily and only when other issues are also involved.



Ellen Grusse

Photo by Nancy Wechsler

**Nancy: Is it arbitrary how you get into a certain cottage?**

Ellen: A lot of it, but most of it is that the institution decides that you are this kind of person . . . they are very good at categorizing people. You're this way and you're that way and therefore this cottage will do you the most amount of good and therefore they strongly recommend you go into that cottage. It looks like the decision is the inmate's but that's fucked up and not real, because over that is the threat of loss of parole, loss of good time, loss of privileges, going off grounds . . . so it's like they are saying to you play the game my way and your life may be a little more comfy and you will get out earlier. You have no decisions really.

**Nancy: Were you watched? How were you treated?**

Ellen: We weren't watched, really. It was exactly the opposite. Niantic being a 'liberal' institution, being that we are white, being that we are middle class, being that I had a college education, keeping in mind that the whole thing got a lot of press coverage — we received a lot of preferential treatment in jail. For example, we weren't there for a hot minute before the head person in education came down and offered us these hot jobs as tutors. (We were placed in the same cottage, in rooms next door, and given the same jobs. They never tried to separate us.) They wanted to over-nice us to death. They wanted to buy us off. That was their whole approach — Give us the best jobs, give us all these privileges . . . find every opportunity to tell us how different we are from most inmates. Most of the staff were supportive of us not talking. They didn't think we belonged there either. It was a whole different bag than most women in prison. Our experiences are not anywhere near the same as people who are in really heavy jails like Jill or Susan.

**Nancy: Were you aware of the conditions Jill was dealing with at Madison County Jail? From your descriptions**

**of Niantic it seems like things are a lot worse down in Kentucky for Jill.**

Ellen: Oh yeh. The conditions down there are terrible. But it is interesting that in talking to Jill and in talkin with Susan that in spite of the external conditions — and there sure are differences in physical comforts and all that in the different jails . . . in spite of these differences we still all went through the same head trips . . . that doesn't change. We all go through patterns of being able to deal, being up, enthusiastic, confrontive, and periods of time of being flipped out and totally scared, totally passive, totally insecure. So it isn't the externals. I think the external conditions have a lot to do with what you can accomplish, what you can confront. I think it is more difficult to confront Niantic than it is to confront Worcester County [where Saxe is] or Madison County [where Jill is]. Cause at Worcester and Madison it is so clear that the fuckover is there, and at Niantic it is really hazy.

**Nancy: You were in jail for about seven months. Can you talk about what kinds of things you gained, and lost from that experience?**

Ellen: I don't know if I'm in a position to talk about it right now. I tend to avoid or not be in touch with some of what I'm feeling around it. Let's see. I have to plug back into the time when it was all happening. Going back through all that incredible horse-shit [FBI and grand jury harassment]. I wouldn't describe myself as a-political at that point, but I certainly had been a year prior to it. During that year I had been exposed to feminism, to gay issues, to socialist issues, communist issues. It was the first time in my life I had been thinking in those terms. I had gone back to school and I was involving myself in women's stuff there. I wanted to be involved in the struggle — and at that point it was on a very liberal level. Women's stuff drew me in to begin with, but then I was exposed to not only the oppression of women but also from that I could connect with and identify with struggles in other places that people were going through. So basically at the time when this happened [the grand jury subpoena] I was just beginning to widen my political perspective. I was also a newcomer, felt totally naive, and the people around me seemed to have it a lot together. I looked to these people for some kind of guidance. I knew on a gut level that I had some disagreements with them, but when all this grand jury shit came down I wasn't yet finished processing this stuff.

**Nancy: Had you just come out when all this happened?**

Ellen: Yes. And coming out had a real lot to do with everything. I was in the straight world, in an insurance company, aligning myself with the powers there, and was into an upward mobility thing. And the powers there of course are men. So I was pretty male identified. And then I came out and it just changed my whole way of thinking . . . that being a woman is wonderful, that being a woman is good, being a woman is positive and not negative and it's the men that are fucked up and not us. So . . . when this whole thing came down I was not really prepared for it. I was having a feeling that I was in over my head. I was still being influenced by society and propriety, and wondering what my mother would think . . . those kind of things. When this happened to me it was like — Declare Yourself. And it was heavy. It was the heaviest thing that has ever happened to me in my whole life. Because it was not only declare yourself to yourself — Ellen, but declare yourself to the world. And the world includes your family who

you know is not going to support you. I was not ready to do that emotionally and I had real heavy fears about going to jail. But I also knew I could not compromise my position [not to testify].

The court thing was hell. I can't stand being the center of any kind of attention. Dealing with reporters day after day after day — they just want to sensationalize and not talk about the issues. I was going through lots of conflicts about the legal process. Knowing the courts would not be on our side in any way, shape, or form, but playing this legal game (that was totally absurd) . . . feeling the anger and frustration of sitting in that courtroom and seeing the condescension and power of the judge . . . Confronting the Grand Jury was a very intimidating thing to do. I have been a very confrontive person all my life but I always chose when to be and when not to be, and in this case I had no choice. So I was pushed to grow, I had to grow. When this first came down I was still at the point of wanting to think that the legal system was fair in some way. That maybe things weren't so rotten, so repressive. But going through all this made it clear that things were really rotten — no doubt about it. The whole experience also made me deal with things that before I wouldn't confront — such as issues around armed struggle, violence and violent action. It was like a showdown. I had to confront where I was politically. The liberal tendencies had to be confronted and thrown out.

**Nancy: So you now define yourself as a political person?**

Ellen: Yes, definitely.

**Nancy: Do you feel that your attitude towards the Left has changed?**

Ellen: I was very closed before this last year. But now I am much more open. The people who supported me most closely in New Haven have a socialist analysis — or are moving in that direction. I was down in N.Y.C. last weekend for the Susan Saxe and Assata Shakur benefit. Shoshana was there also [Pat Swinton, recently acquitted of conspiracy in anti-war bombings]. I feel a definite identification with all those people and struggles . . . it's just clear that there are those ties . . . that we are all being totally fucked over. So it's certainly expanded my view. If you want to use labels you could say the way I saw myself before all this happened was as a feminist . . . and my definition has definitely broadened now.

**Nancy: People are probably wondering what you are doing now. Cooling out?**

Ellen: Yeh, cooling out. On a personal level I am trying to develop some kind of stability in my life. I'm living in a house with several other women. I'm in a study group to further develop my politics. I've been forced to do some writing and public speaking. I still feel a responsibility around the grand jury stuff. I still feel like I want to be a part of it. But I don't want to be identified only as Ellen Grusse, Grand Jury Subpoenee. That wasn't my definition of me — that was the definition the government put on me.

**Nancy: How are you supporting yourself now?**

Ellen: I'm on welfare. I came out [of jail] with hepatitis so I was forced into doing this whole welfare trip, which is really incredible. The whole bureaucracy . . . not to mention that they don't give you enough to live on, which is really frustrating. I'd like to get a job as soon as possible so I could feel a little more secure financially.

CONTINUED NEXT WEEK



# A FRESH LOOK

By Allen Young

It's time for a fresh look at how the press is dealing with the subject of homosexuality and gay liberation. Too often, we focus our discussions on the press around such major publishing events as the recent *Time* cover story on the case of Air Force Sgt. Leonard Matlovich, or on how the press covers the struggle for gay civil rights legislation. Quite by chance, several publications that I do not read regularly came into my hands last week. As I read through them, I was struck with the dynamic between the content of those publications and my own gay consciousness. That was the genesis for this article.

+ + +  
*The National Lampoon*, with nearly one million circulation, is America's major humor magazine. Well, it seems that homosexuality, or cocksucking in particular, is good fare for humor magazines. The December issue of the *Lampoon* focuses on "money," and the pseudo-Marxists who run the *Lampoon* (who don't seem to be faring too badly in the business world by the looks of their ad revenue) use anti-homosexual prejudice as a way of making fun of rich businessmen. The issue's major article is entitled "*The National Lampoon* Guide to Effective Salesmanship," and the central joke of the piece is that salesmen peddle their wares successfully by sucking off the businessmen they sell to:

"Two small words together make the one big principle of salesmanship today.

"Blow job."

Authors Tony Hendra and Gerald Sussman imply that the high-ranking executives of America's major corporations are resourceful cocksuckers or the lascivious recipients of blow jobs:

"The legendary Charles Revson of Revlon, Inc., once had to make a presentation to the entire board of the nation's largest drug chain. Fifteen men confronted him across the table. Undaunted, Revson, who practices relentlessly at enlarging his mouth by sucking footballs, took all five senior officers in his mouth, two more in his armpits, two more by hand, diddled two with his feet, nuzzled two with his head, and caressed the other two with the inside of his thighs. Sounds tough? Sure it was — but that's what salesmen are made of. (P.S. Revson clinched the sale.)"

Sounds funny? Of course it does. But *The National Lampoon* is not a magazine for homosexuals, and we have to consider the fact that most of the people reading it are college students, primarily young men, and it's hard for me to laugh at this kind of humor knowing that for most of the readers, it's just a more sophisticated version of the fag joke. Politically, I find it particularly annoying, since it reminds me of the mid-1960s humor of Jerry Rubin who, in his book *Do It!* had Mayor Daley and J. Edgar Hoover sucking each other off. ("What's Wrong With Sucking?" was the title of a critique written by Step May, a Chicago gay liberationist, in one of the earliest and best gay critiques from within the New Left.)

The writers have no sympathy for

any real-life salesmen (many of whom are in fact gay), and their presentation of salesmen as cocksuckers is all the more infuriating to me because some salesmen are in fact corrupt businessmen who are, as the writers note, "aware that any product they might be discussing is either carcinogenic, obsolescent, lethally unsafe, addictive, pollutive, totally unnecessary, or all of the above."

There is only a slight hint that the authors are willing to laugh at themselves:

"SALESMAN: Hello, Mr. Jones. This is Gerald Sussman, president of [name of company]. I'd like to talk to you about your next [name of product] purchase. You say you don't need any [name of product] at the moment? Not even if I gave you the best blow job you ever had?"

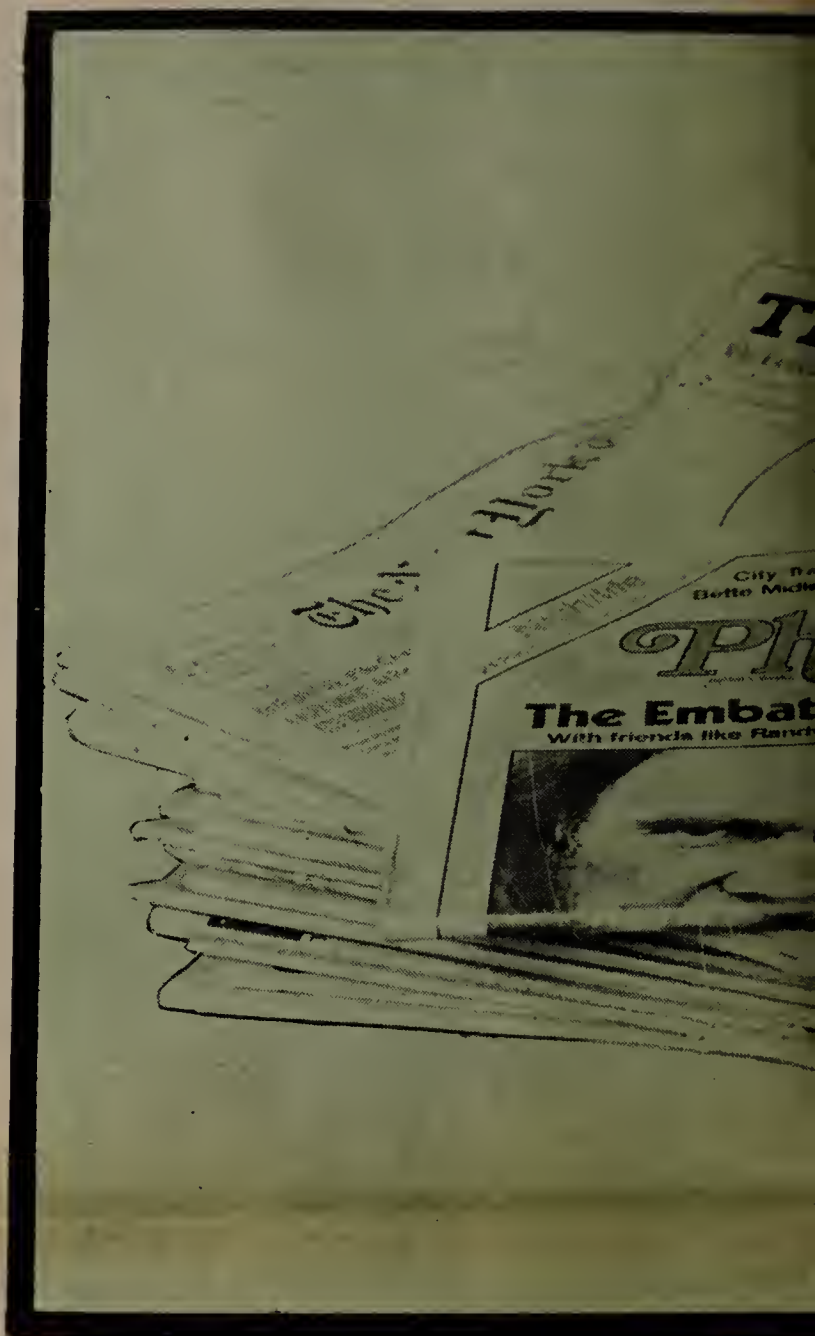
Now, Gerald Sussman is one of the authors and he's willing to let his name be used in the dialogue that way. What does this mean? Maybe it's a case of the other author taking a dig at Sussman. We can't know for sure. These authors may even be gay themselves (they seem quite knowledgeable about blow jobs!) and perhaps they feel that the salesman-as-cocksucker riff has humor all its own, aside from any association with real-life homosexuals. In fact, there is a curious, highly-ironical assumption throughout the article that the cocksucking salesman is not really a homosexual. At one point, in advising the salesman on how to behave when he is being interviewed for a job, the authors write:

"Any questions that the interviewer asks of you during the course of the blow job should be answered clearly. Don't mumble. Keep the rhythm steady with your hand. Talking with your mouth full is bad manners.

"Never answer any questions or make any remarks in a 'boy' or 'amorous' manner. And never, never get, or even pretend to get, 'excited' or 'hot.' Speak pleasantly and go about your business in a cool, professional manner. Bear in mind that interviewers are always on the lookout for any signs of homosexuality. Finally, if you find yourself in a situation where you are being interviewed along with another man, or even several others, be aggressive and imaginative in making sure that you are the first to get his penis in your mouth. Free enterprise has no time for pussycats."

And the authors suggest that the salesman show love for his customer: "Of course, it's not the same kind of love you have for your wife and children or your parents or even your best friends, but it's a very genuine feeling you should convey, a desire to please, to be of service, to fulfill your customer's needs. And the best way to show him how you feel is to give him that all-important blow-job."

The primary brunt of humor is the unscrupulous businessman, the greedy fellow who will stop at nothing to clinch the deal. But that's where the cocksucking comes in — the greedy businessman or salesman will even engage in homosexual acts (the ultimate in degradation) as part of their greedy way of life. So, despite any subtleties one might find, this is all an anti-homosexual put-down that we



should protest. I don't think it would do much good to protest to the editors of *The National Lampoon*, however. It's a publication that prides itself on its ability to offend, and if we tell them we've been offended, chances are that they'll do nothing but congratulate themselves on a job well done. But at the risk of being accused of not having a sense of humor, this is the kind of stuff I won't laugh at.

*Rolling Stone*, the bi-weekly news-magazine of the rock world, has become a truly mass circulation periodical with an audience that looks to it for news not only of music but of politics and current affairs generally. Gay consciousness is hard to find in the pages of *Rolling Stone*. The only full-length articles on homosexuality I've ever seen in the paper were a put-down of gay activism (published several years ago), and, rather recently, a full-length discussion of *The Advocate* by the author of the book *The Greatest Little Boy in the World*, still writing under the pseudonym John Reid. In his piece about *The Advocate*, Reid praised the paper's coverage of the gay scene, but seemed to spend most of his words discussing the sex paraphernalia and personal ads. One had the uncomfortable feeling that he sold the piece to *Rolling Stone* because of the titillation it offered.

The two issues of *Rolling Stone* that I looked at were dated Jan. 1 and Jan. 15. Homosexuals were mentioned specifically a couple of times. In a tribute to the recently-retired Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, Mary

Ellen Gayle American City Southern Cal

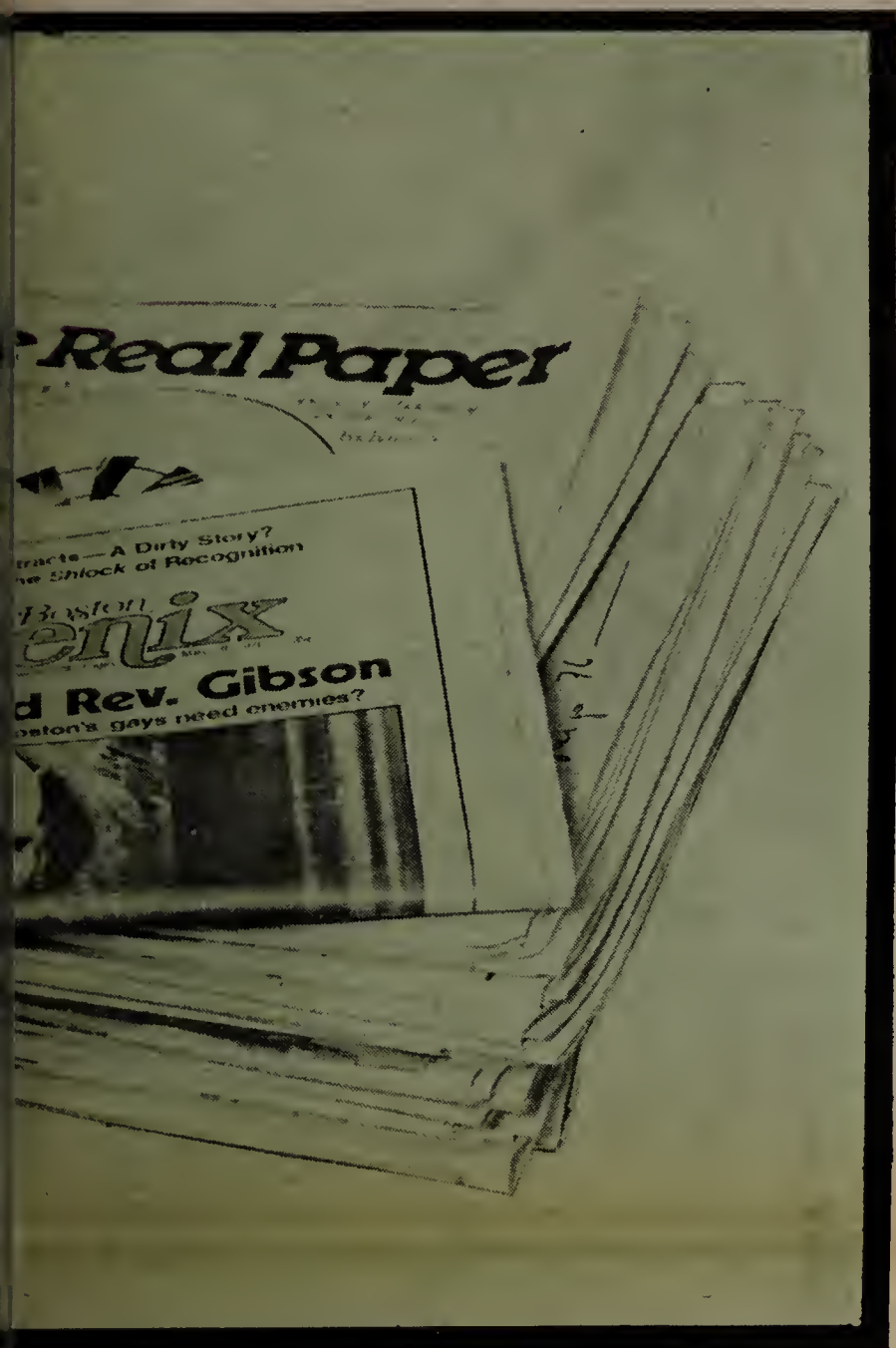
"If the war if Richard M banished from radicals, cor environmental can't sleep we less free to Douglas des credit."

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*Rolling Stone* quotations er one of the ite Council mem ing: "... adults, wome plumbers, an place in the seems that I collection of and it's hard view is. Wha people choos what is in the readers? Of c feminists, it's fool, but ca significant po *Rolling Stone* speaking "co ers and edito



# AT THE PRESS



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that anti-homosexual prejudice is "not  
hip," but *Rolling Stone's* conscious-  
ness on sexism is so poor that I'd be  
unwilling to make any assumptions  
about its editors or writers.

Mostly, homosexuals remain invis-  
ible in the pages of *Rolling Stone*. Who  
among the popular music stars, male  
or female, has been an upfront  
homosexual? None that I know of.  
Janis Joplin's bi-sexuality, for ex-  
ample, didn't get revealed in print (as  
far as I know) until after her death. In  
the *Rolling Stone*, Nat Hentoff's  
comprehensive article on the Bob  
Dylan Rolling Thunder Revue includes  
long quotations from well-known gay  
poet Allen Ginsberg and bi-sexual  
singer Joan Baez, but amid many  
questions about sexuality on the tour,  
the subject of homosexuality is care-  
fully ignored. In talking writing about  
the movie that Dylan is making,  
Hentoff notes:

"Also intermittently involved are  
members of the band, virtuosic David  
Mansfield among them. As an educa-  
tional insert in the bordello sequence,  
Allen Ginsberg is seen in his business  
suit, taking Mansfield (playing a chaste  
14-year-old) to lose his cherry, as  
Ginsberg puts it in the old-time ver-  
nacular."

Now, in truth, Mansfield is an  
incredibly beautiful 19-year-old (Gins-  
berg calls him "Botticelli-faced" on  
the liner notes of Dylan's new album  
"Desire"), and if a writer with gay  
consciousness were discussing this  
vignette from the movie, it would be  
essential to discuss the probably homo-

erotic interaction between Ginsberg  
and Mansfield.

One of the major articles in the  
*Rolling Stone* concerns the reorganiza-  
tion of the Jefferson Starship, and it  
focuses a lot on Marty Balin's aliena-  
tion from the group and his decision to  
return to the stage with it. The article  
refers to Balin's "anonymous life" and  
there is the statement that his "per-  
sonality has a mystical bent that's  
reflected in a house filled with books  
on esoteric disciplines and histories of  
ancient cultures [which] gives him a  
detachment that only occasionally  
breaks down."

Now if one is going to write about  
the internal dynamic of rock groups,  
the sexuality of certain members is  
bound to be a factor. Ever since I can  
remember, I've heard that Marty Balin  
is gay. If it's true, and if his gayness is  
a factor in his relationships with the  
other members of the group, why  
doesn't this appear in *Rolling Stone*?  
Does Balin have the right to privacy?  
Well, yes. But the readers of *Rolling  
Stone*, especially the gay ones, also  
have the right to know that some of  
these stars are gay. Otherwise, the rock  
scene can remain just as alienating to  
gay people as "Father Knows Best."  
It's a dilemma that really bothers me.  
It's even important musically.

The writer: "After the show, Balin  
slouched in his room looking drained  
and tired. He's a loner by choice, an  
odd amalgam of innocence and cyni-  
cism and rarely trustful of the world  
and the people around him. "I don't  
have any friends," he once said.  
'Friends stab you in the back,' and  
later, 'I can't fall in love'." If Balin is  
gay, don't these comments have an  
entirely different meaning? Balin is  
described as a compulsive painter, a  
Zen romantic, a Don Quixote, "the  
James Dean of rock and roll." If Balin  
is gay, don't these descriptions have a  
special meaning? Why can't we be told  
the truth? If the star stays in the closet,  
and the rock writer goes along, the  
truth suffers badly. (Even if Balin isn't  
gay, my point is valid.) I can respect  
the gay star's right to privacy, but  
when the star becomes a public figure  
through the media, the same sexual  
privacy may contribute to the oppres-  
sion of gay people. This is a fact that  
the gay star — and the rest of us —  
must live with.

In the same issue, writer Dave Marsh  
explores the subject of "Patti Smith:  
Coal Stove Visionary." Now if I were  
the editor of *Rolling Stone*, I'd assign a  
lesbian-feminist writer to do an article  
on Patti Smith. There is a reference to  
"gender ambiguity" and to the "ag-  
gressive primarily as a lesbian imagery  
of her first book, *Seventh Heaven*,"  
but Patti Smith is portrayed primarily  
as a tough cookie and the sexual  
politics of her poetry is neither  
explained nor criticized to my satisfac-  
tion. And while *Rolling Stone* is quick  
to give you all the details on the  
personal lives of the rock stars, one  
gets the impression that Dave Marsh  
was too up-tight to even ask Patti  
Smith directly if she is a lesbian and  
what she thinks about the relevance of  
lesbianism to her poetry and music.

+ + +

The New York *Times* is the last  
publication that casually came into my

hands this week. There wasn't a single  
news story specifically relating to the  
city's huge gay community, though one  
article (with photo) was about a 26-  
year-old man who killed himself by  
jumping off the Empire State Building,  
and I remain convinced that gay people  
still choose suicide as a response to the  
homophobia, the loneliness and the  
despair we experience in this society (so  
even if this particular man was not gay,  
I could not help but wonder).

A few years ago, The New York  
*Times* had a policy against even pub-  
lishing the word homosexual, and for a  
while after Stonewall they put quota-  
tion marks around the word gay. I  
found two mentions of homosexuals in  
the Feb. 4 New York *Times*. An  
editorial praising Herman Schwartz,  
the nominee for chairman of the New  
York State Department of Correction,  
referred to "brutality, homosexuality,  
smuggling and other abuses in jails."  
The phrasing really made me angry.  
Brutality, violence and rape are abuses  
(inside or outside of jails). Homosex-  
uality is only considered an abuse if the  
writer finds it abusive. Prison "reform-  
ers" are pressing for heterosexual  
conjugal visits. What are they going to  
say about homosexual love among  
prisoners? One can only presume that  
if the "liberal" New York *Times* has  
this kind of consciousness on homo-  
sexuality, there will be no place for gay  
love in the "reformed" prison sys-  
tem. The inclusion of "homosexual-  
ity" as an "abuse" in this editorial is  
an example of the continued homo-  
phobia of The New York *Times*.

A bright sign, however, appeared  
nearby on the Op-Ed page, in a  
brilliantly insightful article entitled  
"Doomsday Is Coming at 7:32 A.M.,  
Jan. 2, 2000 — (6:32 A.M., Central  
Standard Time)," by Roy Peter Clark,  
an assistant professor of English at  
Auburn University, Montgomery, Ala.  
The article is a serious critique of evan-  
gelical prophets of doom:

"Paperback-book prophets foresee  
a time when millions of Christians will  
disappear from the earth to join their  
heavenly Father in rapture. We are told  
that the Antichrist and his minions  
(Communists, Socialists, athiests, as-  
trologers, homosexuals, anybody you  
don't like) prowl the earth in search of  
souls to devour. Because of sexual per-  
version, blasphemy, apostasy, a litany  
of vices, God will once again destroy  
the world as He did in the days of  
Noah and Sodom and Gomorrah."

Clark ends his article with a beauti-  
ful affirmation of life on earth and a  
commitment to "a determination to  
improve man's [sic] plight on earth by  
hard work and meaningful social  
change."

This admittedly random critique of  
the press doesn't prove anything. But it  
does, I hope, offer some indications of  
the problems that gay people face in  
dealing with the mass media or com-  
munication. This critique does, I think,  
show that homophobia still exists, that  
the invisibility of the homosexual is  
perhaps our major problem, while it  
also shows that some writers have  
learned a great deal from the gay  
liberation movement and have incor-  
porated a certain degree of gay  
consciousness in their work.



# ORIGIN

By Regina Kahney

I never understood the big deal about New Year's Eve until 1968. Before that, the evening just seemed like an excuse to get drunk, make a fool of yourself and get away with it. But in 1968 New Year's Eve took on a significance for me that will last until my final breath. On January 1st, 1968, at approximately 4:00 a.m., sober but trembling violently, with two high-school friends in a drunken stupor on my bedroom floor not two feet from me, I came out and began my first relationship with another woman, a woman a year younger than me. I was 17, and had been in love with her for a long time.

It was not until March of 1975 that I was finally able to tell my parents. And from the other side of the kitchen table they cried and hit me with The Question: Why? I could only shrug my shoulders and hope that my face expressed to them that I had been asking the same question for seven years myself.

I had once been hell-bent on discovering the origins of my lesbianism. It was a passion, one of my favorite hobbies. I spent two and a half years with my lover in high school, both of us clinging to that "I-fell-in-love-with-someone-and-it-just-happens-to-be-a-woman" rationalization that was so necessary to our survival at the time. I guess I should be flattered that after she broke up with me she never became involved with another woman. I assumed, too, that it was a one-shot deal and joined the ranks of the deflowered college coed. But in the middle of my Junior year I found myself in love with a first-year French major who also "just happened to be" the same sex as me. The relationships I had had with men between Woman #1 and Woman #2 had left me literally cold, and my feelings for this spunky, intense little woman started to frighten me. Was I really a — heaven forbid! — lesbian?

I dropped some mescaline the last week of that year in school and there is nothing like Funny Powder to strip you of your defense mechanisms and introduce you to yourself. After I finally crashed I became vegetable-like, my friends taking care of me that last week of school. "Okay, Reg, it's time for lunch now. Eat." And "Okay, Reg. We're going to bed now. Take off your shoes." I didn't talk, I barely ate, I may have slept. I had been devastated by the realization that I was once again in love with a woman.

I had been so positive about my

heterosexuality! Sure, I'd faked an orgasm here and there with men, but I figured with a little practice I'd really start to enjoy it. What went wrong?

I went home for the summer that year to a job as a legal secretary. I left the office early several times because the typewriter keys would not cooperate with my usually nimble fingers. I daydreamed during dictation. I would come home, eat, and go up to my room and do nothing. Visions of my childhood kept invading my eyes. A scene from our first house: I am walking down my driveway to my friend's house. I have on long pants and a shirt. It is summer. I can't see my face, but I know my hair is short. We are going to play house. I am the father. Further back: I am sitting in the bedroom I share with my brother, in the little space between our beds. I have a doll — the only doll I ever owned. I have taken off its clothes and am busy making a noose when my mother walks in. I push the doll and the rope under the bed, unseen. It stops there. I am under seven years old. This I am sure of because we moved from that house when I was in second grade.

I turn everything over in my mind a hundred times. I decide there must be one thing — one event that happened before I was even six years old — to explain it. It is that one thing — that forgotten event — that makes me a lesbian today. I am sure of it. It could be nothing else. Was I gangraped when I was four? Did I catch my parents making love? Did they lock me in the closet and feed me bread and water for a week? I was convinced it couldn't be anything else; it couldn't be a combination of things. It had to be one elusive event that I had completely repressed. It had to be.

My parents and my upbringing are so average and so normal that *nothing* distinguishes them. So I sit and make a list of all the things about me that fit the norm. Middle-class family. Older brother, hated and then adored. I was a tomboy. Big deal. Played hard ball with the boys while the other little girls in the neighborhood wheeled their baby carriages up and down the street. Parents were normal — mother who couldn't tell me about sex (instead she gave me that cloying little "Personally Yours" pamphlet that Modess puts out so I wouldn't think I was dying the first time I found blood in my underwear); father who would never tell me who he voted for or how much money he made; brother who showed me the condoms he was going to use on his latest girlfriend (in reality not losing his cherry till the day *after* the wedding. Too tired, he said.) Father is smart. Mother plays dumb.

I smoked when I was ten, went fish-

ing, got straight As through high school, was beat up several times by the Polish girl in the neighborhood who hated Jews. Sneaked a peek at my father's Playboys when he wasn't home, stole candy and gum from the corner store, saw "West Side Story" six or seven times, ripped off empty soda bottles from behind the liquor store and carried them back through the front door to collect the deposit money. Shot spitballs from the top row in the movies, cut classes in high school, got elected to various offices, joined clubs, necked at parties, went steady, lost my virginity at the age of 20 in a Rutgers University frat house (with a dresser pushed up against the door and the rest of the brothers out in the hall yelling "Go! Go! Go!").

I mean really, how much more average could I be? Spent every Easter week during college in Daytona Beach with my sorority sisters, smoked dope, got a B.A. in English. Type and take shorthand. 5'7", 117 pounds, brown hair, blue eyes, 36-25-35. Had parakeets that perpetually died, cats and dogs that perpetually ran away, turtles that perpetually got moldy. A Kodak Brownie and a record player and all the latest 45s. Wore knee socks and penny loafers and kilts and button-down blouses and desert boots and sweat socks with my jeans. Watched "The Wonderful World of Disney" every Sunday night till I was 12 or 13 and always ran to the kitchen for a peanut butter sandwich during the commercials.

The walls of my room were covered with Bob Dylan and Janis Joplin and my bulletin board was hidden behind a mass of memorabilia of just about every day of my life. Played guitar and sang a little and went to slumber parties and read *Candy* sitting in the back of my 9th grade math class and

went to Eisenhower's funeral. Had a stamp collection and a coin collection and a shell collection. Wore madras and paisley and circle pins and name necklaces and Bass Weejuns and culottes and Villager skirts and had a benchwarmer and a passion for hot fudge sundaes. My Levi's were always long enough and my face was always broken out and I started shaving my legs when I was 13 and got my period when I was 14 and started wearing eye shadow when I was 15 and wondered if I would ever really *need* a bra until I was 16.

When I was little I watched "Andy's Gang" and "The Mickey Mouse Club" and washed the dishes after dinner and wore ankle socks and crinoline that scraped my chin when I sat. Did the Bunny Hop at my brother's Bar Mitzvah and later the Limbo and the Twist and the Cha-Cha and a modified box step and somewhere in the middle of all this mediocrity something happened that resulted in my finding myself, my last year in high school, with a woman lover, and having more sex at the tender age of 17 than anyone else in my high school.

Since moving to New York last year and finally being surrounded by people just like me, I found myself ruminating less and less about the origins of my lesbianism. My guilt had diminished to the point where, after seven years of soul-searching and hair-tearing, I could finally tell my parents. Finally! I feel like someone gave me an enema seven years ago and just told me yesterday I could get up and go to the bathroom.

I went from a self-destructive guilt hang-up to a superficial acceptance of my plight to a new-found happiness in my preference for women. Unfortunately my parents are now doing what I have spent the last seven years doing —

(Continued on page 13)

## Womenspaces

March 26 and 27 Fri. and Sat. nights

own disco



## Carol and the Burgundies

Fri.-Sun., April 2-4

Sunday night is a benefit for Other Voices Bookstore

The Private Room for Women at the OZ

969 Commonwealth Ave., Boston

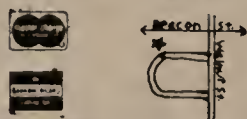
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GCN, March 20, 1976 • Page 11





## The Satyricon, Flesh Condon, Bisexuality

by Brian A. Coombs, B.U., Classics 453, A Paper Delivered at the *First Boston Symposium on Homophilia*, Gay Men's Center of Greater Boston, March 1976.

The leading characters in the *Satyricon* of Petronius are involved in many sexual episodes, both hetero- and homosexual. Although this bisexuality has shocked many moderns, what did the Romans themselves think of it, and what was purpose in using bisexuality in the *Satyricon*? A look at Roman, especially Neronian, mores and the literary method of the *Satyricon* shows that Petronius utilized bisexuality not for shock value but to poke at old Roman values and also to increase interactional possibilities in plot and characterization.

The success of this interesting mode is evident even in the mere fragments of the *Satyricon* which have come down to us.

The early Romans were very much against bisexuality, seeing it as a degenerate Greek practice, yet by the first century BC, the Romans had become much more liberal on this and other issues. Although Julius Caesar was taunted as "queen" by his enemies (Suet. Div. Jul.-49), he was never prosecuted for it and even joked about it, saying in response that "Semiramis was supreme in Syria and the Amazons once ruled over a large part of Asia." [Asia Minor] (Suet. Div. Jul.-22). During the same period, the poet Catullus, besides praising his Lesbia, was praising the young Iuventius (Cat. 48, et al.).

Augustus, in his program to restore Roman morals, did not encourage bisexuality; however, he did not ban it either. Augustus' official poet, Vergil,

mentions homosexuality and expresses homophilia in the *Eclogues*, but in the later *Aeneid*, the story of Nisus and Euryalus sounds like a moral fable about two young boys who merely happen to be selflessly devoted to one another (Aen. V-300ff). The rest of the *Aeneid*'s characters tend to be straight, upright, epitomes of Roman "virtue" (with a few exceptions perhaps only to stir up the plot). Vergil's *Aeneid*, on the whole, praises the Roman destiny to rule the world and the old virtues that give the Romans that "destiny." The *Aeneid* also comes to stand for these values to later generations and this is important to an understanding of the *Satyricon*.

Bisexuality by Nero's time had become commonplace among the upper classes. Suetonius, writing about the Emperor Claudius, Nero's predecessor, says of him, "His feeling for women were extremely passionate, but boys and men left him cold," (Suet. Div. Claud.-33), a fact so unusual for the times that Suetonius thinks it worth recording for posterity! When Claudius had his son-in-law, Pompey, killed, Pompey was in bed with a favorite catamite (Suet. Div. Claud.-22). When this story was adapted into the book *I, Claudius*, translated by Robert Graves, Pompey ends up in bed with a woman when killed, which shows the difference between Roman attitudes and our own. Graves does better with the Camille-like death-bed scene of Socrates in *The White Goddess*, but has decided homophobic tendencies.

Nero himself was unabashedly bisexual, as all the contemporary historians noted. The following passage from Suetonius (Nero-28) is typical:

*He [Nero] went through a wedding ceremony with him [Sporus] — dowry, bridal veil and all — which the whole Court attended; then brought him home, and treated him as wife. He*

*dressed Sporus in the fine clothes normally worn by an Empress and took him in his own litter not only to every Greek assize and fair, but actually through the Street of Images at Rome, kissing him amorously now and then. A rather amusing joke is still going the rounds: the world would have been a happier place had Nero's father Domitius married that sort of wife!*

Although Nero was far from reticent about his "wife," the Roman populace didn't seem very shocked. Their only recorded reaction is their clever double entendre. Juvenal, writing about 40 years after Nero, describes a similar event (of which, like everything else, he does not approve):

*Behold! Here you have a man of high birth and wealth being handed over in marriage to a man, and yet neither shakest thy helmet, nor smitest the earth with thy spear, nor yet protestest to thy father? . . . 'I have a ceremony to attend,' quoth one. 'at dawn tomorrow in the Quirinal Valley.' 'What is the occasion?' 'No need to ask: a friend is taking to himself a husband; quite a small affair.' (Juv. Sat. II, 129-135).*

Despite Juvenal's horror, there were no laws in effect against Gay marriage until the days of Theodosius in the late fourth century AD.

So Nero's court, which was Petronius' audience, was very open about bisexuality. Therefore, the shock value would have been virtually nonexistent. To find its real value in the *Satyricon*,

it is necessary to look at the purpose of the work, how it accomplishes this, and how the work utilizes bisexuality in the process.

Froma Zeitlin [5] in her paper on Petronius says that by manipulation of form and content (*genre crossing*) and self-parody, Petronius creates a world of anarchy in the *Satyricon* that defies and denies traditional Roman values, and parodies many specifics. For example, the poem delivered on the Civil War by Eumolpus (Ch. 119-124) is a limp imitation of Lucan. But one of the major poets who is parodied in the *Satyricon* is Vergil, the Queen of Lyrics. Besides direct quotations and allusions, such as the outrageous pastiche in Ch. 132, taken directly from Vergil, that describes the reaction of Encolpius' organ, the main characters of the *Aeneid* appear to be parodied by the main characters of the *Satyricon*. Aeneas is driven on by the gods through many adventures. Encolpius is driven on by the god Priapus through many adventures parodying those of Aeneas. Aeneas' father, Anchises, is venerated and full of wisdom. Encolpius' father surrogate, Eumolpus, is pelted for his bad poetry and is full of wisdom about how to write poetry and to seduce minors, at which he is very adept! Although the topic is too lengthy to be fully discussed here, it is apparent that the *Aeneid* characters are parodied by their Petronian counterparts, not only by their personalities but by their (sexual) actions too.

(Continued on page 13)

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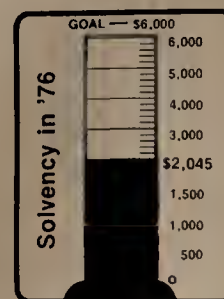
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## To Your Health

By Sanford M. Reder, M.D.

For a long time, I have given thought to writing a column for GCN which would speak to a variety of medical problems encountered by gay men and women. Lack of information — about basic bodily functions, common diseases, patients' rights and other issues — is by no means confined to the gay community. The medical and paramedical professions, along with the entire education process, leave to chance any real understanding that will enable people to take better care of themselves and their bodies. At times of illness, anxiety frequently prevents people from asserting themselves with a profession that historically has set itself apart from (and above) the people they are ostensibly committed to help. However, all of the problems that heterosexual men and women face are compounded for gays. Many feel judged because of their sexual preference. Frequently, information which is essential to appropriate diagnosis and treatment is neither elicited by the physician nor volunteered by the patient. Regularly, assumptions are made by professionals which are demeaning and infuriating to the patient. For many gay women, the problems are further exaggerated by the often humiliating treatment of women, as women, by a male dominated profession.

I recognize that the task of raising the consciousness of the helping professions is beyond the scope of this column. However, a well informed public, aware of some basic information, can do its share in bringing about some of the necessary changes.

Many questions can be answered with the help of currently accepted criteria derived from scientific study. For the vast majority of medical problems, there is little difference between gays and straights. Many patients, however,

tell me that they prefer a gay doctor even for a sprained wrist, not just for sexually related medical and psychosocial problems. I suspect this is because they would like and indeed, are entitled to, the same "total" "comprehensive" "family" care, more easily available to heterosexuals. Much research, social as well as medical, needs to be done to help answer many frequently asked questions which are unique to gays. The best I can do, in many circumstances, is respond with an educated guess, based on my personal experiences and observations, as well as those of other interested professionals, and patients.

I favor a question and answer format for the column. Occasionally I may digress from this style in order to call attention to some important issues and try to bring some order to the often chaotic battleground that exists between myth and reality. I welcome not only your questions, but any comments and ideas for future topics, as well as experiences or advice that you may have to share with me and other members of the gay community.

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Sanford M. Reder, M.D.



## SATYRICON

(Continued from page 12)

Most of the characters in the *Satyricon* either end up *having sex* or *fighting over a sexual partner*, e.g., Giton. This is where one aspect of bisexuality is utilized by Petronius, for polymorphous sexuality allows for unlimited dramatic and characterization possibilities.

An example of this is where Eumolpus is interested in Giton (Ch. 100). But if one thinks about their *Aeneid* counterparts, it is as if Anchises were trying to make Ascanius! This type of parody is still used today. A recent movie, *Flesh Gordon*, parodied the Flash Gordon heroic movies of the 1930s by having the leading characters go through a series of adventures which were mostly bisexual. Just as "Flesh Gordon" rejected and parodied the ideal social values of the earlier Flash Gordon, the *Satyricon* parodies and rejects the ideal social values set forth by the earlier and not inferior *Aeneid*.

Since bisexuality allows such great dramatic possibilities, Petronius uses this to reinforce his anarchic world. Lucretius, in his famous passage on love, recommends promiscuity as a way to avoid emotional attachment. Promiscuity is more easily realized with bisexuality, he says, and Petronius' characters manage to avoid any stable emotional attachment which would order their world. Instead, their world is one of hedonistic competition where nobody is really to be completely trusted, thus furthering the anarchic world view of the *Satyricon* and heightening the transitoriness of love and life.

Petronius doesn't use bisexuality merely for its shock value or as a device separate from either plot or characterization. His audience was too sophisticated for that. He does, however, utilize bisexuality as an instrument of parody to reject the old Roman values by rejecting the *Aeneid* which stood for

them. The *Aeneid*, a major work of a homosexual, was nonetheless a "public" work and it is in Vergil's *Eclogues* that a "supportive" homophilia is expressed. He also uses the greater freedom of bisexuality as a means to "anarchy" and freedom of action for his characters, and which Petronius so cleverly uses to negate "bicameral," outdated Roman mores. Bisexuality, which was so despised by the Roman tradition, yet gives so much freedom, became the perfect instrument for Petronius to use to negate old values and create a vibrant sense of self-direction in its place.

## ORIGIN

(Continued from page 10)

trying to figure out why. They are saying "Where did we go wrong?" and "Why did this have to happen to us?" for the third time in my life — first when they found out I was a devout atheist and again when they discovered I was dating a black man in high school. Mother is very curious about what I do in bed. Father, I think, doesn't have to be told. I leave this to them, my legacy of guilt. They will soon realize how fruitless that kind of search is.

For myself, I see no more reason to hide in shame. I have told many of my straight friends that I am gay. I am thinking of coming out in my office. I write articles for gay publications without a pseudonym. I have too much to do to waste any more time wondering who failed where, or if it is even a question of failure. I have seven years to make up for, and I feel suddenly that there is so little time. Every day must count for something.

So this New Year's Eve I stood with my obligatory glass of champagne and watched the festivities, and for the first time in my life I didn't look back and cringe at the thought of that fateful New Year's Eve eight years ago. It doesn't matter anymore *why* I'm gay. What matters now is *how* I'm gay.

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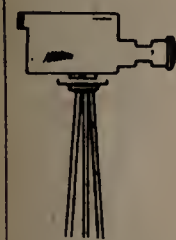
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Amherst Gay Hotline (men & women) 545-0154  
Clark Gay Alliance, Box A-70, Clark Univ., Worcester 01610  
Dignity/Springfield, P.O. Box 488, Forest Park Sta., Springfield 01107  
Everybody's Center, Amherst 545-0883  
Gaybreak Radio (WMUA-FM, 91.9) 545-2876  
Gay Women's Caucus, Amherst 545-3438  
Hotline, Westfield, Mass. (M&Tues. 9 pm-11 pm) 568-9759  
People's Gay Alliance, UMass/Amherst 545-0154  
Sexual Identity Awareness Org., Westfield  
State College, Parenzo Box 197, Westfield 01085  
Southwest Women's Center 545-0626  
Springfield Gay Alliance 583-3904  
Valley Women's Center, Northampton 586-2011

**RHODE ISLAND [area code 401]**  
Alcoholics Together, 290 Westminster St., Rm. 510, Providence 274-4737  
Dignity/Providence, Box 2231, Pawtucket 02861 754-6029  
Gay Women at Brown U, Providence 863-2189  
Gay Women of Providence 831-5184  
Homophile Community Health Service, Providence 274-4737  
MCC Coffee House, Providence 274-1693  
MCC/Providence, 63 Chapin Ave. 274-1693

**CONNECTICUT [area code 203]**  
East Conn. Gay Alliance, Norwich 889-7530  
George W. Henry Foundation, Hartford 522-2646  
Gay Alliance at Yale, 2031 Yale St., New Haven 06520 436-8945  
Hartford Gay Counseling 522-5575, 523-9837  
MCC/Hartford 232-5110, 522-5575  
Gay Switchboard 522-5575  
Institute of Social Ethics/National Gay Archives, 1 Gold St., Suite 22B, Hartford 06103 547-1281  
Kalos/Gay Liberation, Hartford 568-2656  
The Church of the Eternal Flame Universal 527-5612  
Wesleyan Gay Alliance, c/o Wesleyan Women's Center, Wesleyan Sta., Middletown 06457

**NEW HAMPSHIRE [area code 603]**  
Seacoast Area Gay Alliance, Box 1424, 431-8209  
Portsmouth 03801 436-7196, 431-4350  
Women's Group, PO Box 137, Northwood 03261  
(Do not use "gay" on any mail to this group)  
**VERMONT [area code 802]**  
Counseling for Gay Women & Men, c/o Vermont Women's Health Center, 158 Bank St., Burlington 05401 863-1386  
Gay in Vermont, Box 3216, N. Burlington Sta., Burlington 05401 862-2397  
Vermont Gay Women 862-7770, 863-3237  
Women's Switchboard 862-5504  
**MAINE [area code 207]**  
Gay Support & Action, P.O. Box 110, Bangor 04401  
Maine Freewoman's Herald, 193 Middle St., 3rd floor, Portland 04111 774-6071  
Maine Gay Task Force, 193 Middle St., Portland 773-5530  
Maine Gay Task Force Newsletter, P.O. Box 4542, Portland 04112 773-5530  
Gay People's Alliance, 92 Bedford St., University of Maine, Portland 04103 773-2981, x535  
The Wilde-Stein Club, Memorial Union, University of Maine, Orono 04473

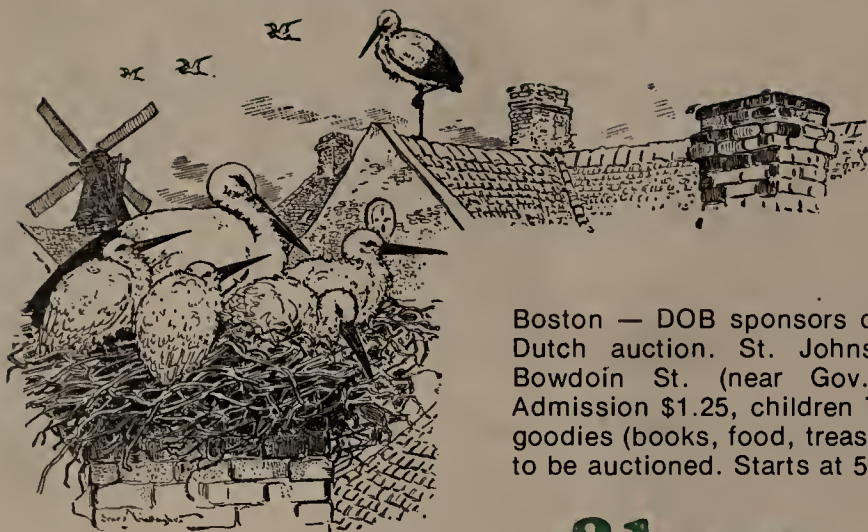
**NEW YORK**  
Capital Dist. Gay Comm. Council, P.O. Box 131, 332 Hudson Ave., Albany, NY 12210 (518) 462-6138  
Dignity, P.O. Box 1554, N.Y., N.Y. 10022  
Gay Activists Alliance, P.O. Box 2, Village Sta. 10014 (212) 677-6090  
Gay Community Service Ctr., 1350 Main St., Buffalo, NY 14209  
Gay Media Coalition, c/o The Women's Center, 243 W. 20th St., NYC, NY 10011 924-9434  
Gay Men's Health Project, 247 W. 11th St 691-6969  
Gay Switchboard 924-4036  
Gay & Women's Alliance for Responsible Media, 370 Lexington Ave., Suite 416, N.Y.C., N.Y.  
Lambda Legal Defense and Educ. Fund Inc. 145 E. 52nd St., NY NY 10022 758-1905  
Lesbian Feminists Liberation, c/o Women's Center, 243 W. 20th St. 691-5460  
Lesbian Switchboard 741-2610  
Mattachine Society, 59 Christopher St., NY, NY 10014 691-1066  
MCC/New York, 201 W. 13th St. (corner of 7th Ave.), Sunday worship 7pm 691-7428  
National Gay Task Force, 80 Fifth Ave., Rm. 506 741-1010  
Oscar Wilde Memorial Bookshop, 15 Christopher St. 255-2097

## Quick Gay Guide

**EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS [area code 617]**  
Alcoholics Together/Worcester 753-0730  
Clark Gay People, Box A-70, Clark U, Worcester 01610 793-7287  
Dignity/Merrimack Valley, P.O. Box 348, Lowell, 01853  
Gay Activists Alliance, c/o Postmaster, General Delivery, Provincetown 487-3393, 487-3234, 487-3344  
Gaypeople/Drop-In Center, Campus Center, 100 Elliot St., Haverhill 01830 374-0929  
Haverhill, N.E.C.C. Gay Line, M 8-10 am, T 6-8 pm, W 12-2 pm  
Homophile Assistance League of Provincetown, Box 674, P-town 02657, 158 Commercial St. 487-9633  
Homophile Union of Montachusett P.O. Box 262, Fitchburg 01420



# March 15 thru 26



## 15 mon

Cambridge — North Cambridge Gay Men's group will meet for its first social gathering at 8 pm. For more info call 661-9362.

## 16 tues

Boston — DOB discussion for women on S&M. Women openly into S&M will be there. Read GCN article of Feb. 7. At 7:30 pm, 419 Boylston St., room 323.

## 18 thur

Boston — "A Portrait of Oscar Wilde," a Twain-Wilde Production with Steve Alexander at the Paulist Center, 5 Park St. Now through April 10; info call 267-0697.

Somerville, Ma. — "Jumping Off the Roof," new feminist review at Theatre 369 in Union Sq. on Thurs., Fri. and Sat. at 8 pm. Tickets \$2; info call 628-1933.

## 19 fri

Boston — "Winning the ERA" is the forum topic at 8 pm, 510 Commonwealth Ave., 4th floor near Kenmore Sq. Donation \$1; info call 262-4260.

## 20 sat

Boston — The Gay Men's Center is having a Rites of Spring Party at 9 pm, at 36 Bromfield St., room 310. Come celebrate the beginning of spring. BYOB. All gay men are welcome.

Boston — DOB sponsors dinner and Dutch auction. St. Johns Church, Bowdoin St. (near Gov. Center). Admission \$1.25, children 75c. Bring goodies (books, food, treasures, etc.) to be auctioned. Starts at 5:30 pm.

## 21 sun

Hartford, CT — MCC sponsors a buffet, 6 pm, 11 Amity St., \$2 per person.

Providence — Dignity monthly service, the third Sunday of each month. Info write Box 2231, Pawtucket, R.I. 02861 or call (617) 754-6029.

Cambridge — Women's Square Dance at Cambridge YWCA, 7 Temple St., from 2-5 pm. Music by Vermont Women's Band, The Northern Spys.

Boston — Gay Dance at BU Sherman Union, Comm. Ave., 9-1 am, benefit HCHS. \$1.50 donation. "Dance your troubles away."

Hartford, CT — Conn. Sexual Orientation Committee will meet at 2:30 pm at Hartford/MCC Center, 11 Amity St., to plan next year's state gay rights bill. All welcome to attend.

## 22 mon

Cambridge — Benefit for Rosie's Place at Bread & Roses, 134 Hampshire St., 7:30 pm. Women's music and theatre, donation \$2.

Providence, RI — Rhode Island College hosts a week-long conference for gay people. Ticket for the week is \$5, or \$1 for each day. Today's topic is "Gay People and the Law." 8 pm, Student Union Ballroom.

## 23 tues

NYC — GAU Socialist Caucus meeting, 7:30 pm at CUNY Grad Center, Rm. 207, on 42nd St. (tween 5th, 6th Aves.). For info call John D'Emilio, (212) 663-0556.

Providence, RI — RI College Conference (see Mon. 22), "Social Services for Gay People," 8 pm, Student Union Ballroom.

Boston — Integrity meeting, "Ethics and/or Gay Relationships," Emmanuel Church, 15 Newbury St., 8:15 pm (Eucharist at 7:30).

## 24 wed

Providence, RI — RI College Conference (see Mon. 22), "Religion and Gay People" with Rev. Troy Perry, 8 pm, Student Union Ballroom.

## 25 thur

Providence, RI — RI College Conference (see Mon. 22), "Gay Lifestyles," by Elaine Noble, 8 pm, Clark Science Bldg., rm. 125.

## 26 fri

Providence, RI — RI College Conference (see Mon. 22), "Gay Drive for Acceptance" with Sgt. Matlovich, 8 pm, Clark Science Bldg., rm. 125.

Worcester, MA — Today starts the New England Gay Conference 1976 held at Clark University this weekend. Activities include lectures, forums, workshops, sporting (participatory) events and social gatherings. Fri. at 8:15, Boston Ballet, \$3; Sat. workshops, sports, Jade & Sarsaparilla concert; Sun. discussions. For more info write Box A-70, Clark U., Worcester, Ma. 01610.



Submit Calendar items to Calendar Editor, GCN, by noon on Wednesday prior to date of publication.

